THE RAMAYANA

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Translated from the Original of Valmiki

A Modernised Version in English Prose

BY

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VOL III

[*Fourth Edition*]

ORIENTAL PUBLISHING CO.

11-D, Surendralal Pyne Lane

Calcutta-12

Published by:
Dhirendra Nath Bose
38A, Motijheel Avenue,
Calcutta—28.

Printed by :
Debiprosad Bose
Joynarayan Press
11-D, Surendralal Pyne Lane
Calcutta—12.

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CHAPTER I

RAMA'S DFSPAIR

Having heard everything in detail about Janaki from Hanuman, the noble Rama said with a contented mind, "Hanuman has easily accomplished what a man cannot even dare conceive. I do not see any one else, besides the feathered King Garuda and the Wind and this great hero, who is capable of crosssing the ocean.

"The city of Lanka is protected by Ravana and is inaccessible even to the Devas and the Danavas. Who can enter the city by his own prowess and come back alive ? He who is not mighty like Hanuman can never dare do so. He has proved himself a worthy servant of the monkey king, Sugriva, by achieving this arduous deed. He is certainly an excellent fellow who after performing the duty appointed by his master, out of his own accord, puts his hand in other matters. He is a mediocre person who does not perform anything else, besides the task allotted to him by his master. He is a bad fellow, rather the worst, who in spite of his ability does not even perform the given work. This hero has performed the work entrusted by his master and has become victorious and has thus satisfied Sugriva. In fact, he has saved me, Lakshmana, nay, even the line of Raghu by bringing information about Janaki. But I am sorry that I can not reward him properly for this act. Now only a friendly embrace is all that I can give and with delight I give him that."

Saying this, Rama, with his hairs standing on end, embraced Hanuman with joy and after thinking for a while began to speak again before Sugriva, "Now the wheareabouts of Janaki have been gathered, but my mind sinks thinking about the crossing of the sea. Vast impassable sea ! I know not how the Vanaras will cross the ocean ! O Hanuman ! you have brought news of Janaki, now tell me the means of crossing the sea." Saying this, Rama began to think with a sorrow-laden heart.

Then Sugriva, King of the Kapis, seeing Rama extremely nervous, began to speak, "O hero ! Why hast thou been cast down with sorrow like an ordinary man ? Cast off your sorrows as an ungrateful person abandons friendship. Now, information of the worshipful Janaki has been received and the location of the enemy's city, Lanka, has been gathered. Then why do you lament thus ? You are intelligent and learned, now cast off your weakness. Surely we shall cross the sea, enter Lanka and destroy the enemy. Danger thickens round him who becomes depressed with sorrow, and he suffers greatly. These Vanara-leaders are exceedingly mighty and powerful, and they are ready even to enter into flames for your good. At their joy, it seems to me that we shall rescue Janaki by destroying the enemy. O hero ! now think of the means. Just devise how a bridge can be constructed across the sea so that we can easily reach the city of Lanka. Unless a causeway is made, even the gods and the Asuras[1] dare not

1 In the original Vedic verse 'Asura' means those

attack Lanka. It is necessary to build a bridge up to Lanka. If the Vanaras can cross the sea, we shall surely be victorious. To speak the truth, this is my conviction strengthened by the joy of the Vanaras. Now cast off this injurious despair which frustrates all human endeavours. Just display your valour. Valour is one's ornament. You are versed in all the *shastras* and most intelligent. Now make preparations for the destruction of the enemy with the help of warrior-friends like myself. When you stand up for a fight bow in hand, I find none in the three worlds who can face you then. Everything depends upon these Vanaras, and if you depend on them you won't have any occasion for despair. Now, be fired up with rage. A gentle Kshatriya becomes worthless and devoid of energy. Moreover, there are very few who are not afraid of a man of violent temper. However, now devise the means of crossing the ocean with us. If the means are ascertained, certainly we shall be victorious. The mighty Vanaras will destroy your enemy by hurling shafts and stones. I find various kinds of auspicious signs and from the feeling of satisfaction in my mind, I think that fortune of victory will soon be within your grasp."

Chapter II

HANUMAN'S NARRATION

Rama having agreed to Sugriva's reasonable words, spoke to Hanuman, "O hero! I

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who have "life and vigour."

shall anyhow cross the sea. Now I ask you, how many forts there are in Lanka. What is the number of troops ? Is the city-gate impregnable ? How is it guarded ? Tell me what you have witnessed with your own eyes. I want to learn these, as if from my own experience." Thereupon Hanuman replied, "Listen, I shall narrate to you how Lanka is impregnable, how it is guarded, how loyal the Rakshasas are, the nature of their army, Ravana's pomp and power and the dreadful aspect of the sea.

"Lanka abounds in horses, elephants and chariots. It has four big, massive gates in four directions. Its gates are strong and provided with bolts. In those gates, huge stones, arrows and other weapons have been kept in readiness with which the hostile army (as soon as it will come in front of it) will be crushed. There are hundreds of sharp iron 'Sataghnis,' fitted with their engines. [1] A golden wall worked with jewels encircles the city and is quite insurmountable. After it, there is an immense moat. It is exceedingly deep and full of crocodiles and fish. In front of every gate, there is a spacious bridge. That bridge is guarded by a machine and the hostile army is thrown into the ditch by that machine. Of them there is one which is the strongest and biggest of all and is adorned with a number of golden pillars and diases. I found king Ravana ready for war, and very cool-headed and cautious. He himself always inspects the army. His city rests on hills

1 Apparently some mechanical contrivances were set up for the defence of the city.

which are not to be climbed without any support. It is quite formidable like a fortress built by the gods. In it, there are water forts, hill-fortresses and four kinds of artificial forts. The city is built on the shore of the sea. No boat can sail in that vast chartless sea as directions cannot be ascertained. Hundreds of thousands of Rakshasas guard the eastern gate of Lanka. Millions of Rakshasas guard the southern gate, ten millions the western gate and hundreds of millions the northern one. They are well-armed and formidable, and they carry swords, shields and lances. With them there are four divisions of army. Quite a number of cavalry they and fighters in chariots guard the inner passage. They are born of heroic families and are servants of Ravana. I have broken Lanka's bridge, pulled down its rampart and sacked the city. Now, let us somehow cross the sea. The Vanaras will surely conquer Lanka. Angada, Dwivida, Mainda, Jamvuvan, Panas, Nala and general Nila alone will be able to achieve the object. They will ruin Lanka, the city of the Rakshasas. If it is desirable to cross the sea with the Vanara host, then our preparations for war should immediately be made."

CHAPTER III

THE MARCH

Rama, hearing everything from beginning to end from Hanuman, said, "It is not impossible for you to crush Lanka. But I have something to say. The present moment is very

auspicious for victory. It is not proper to lose it ; so let us now set out for fight. The wicked Ravana has carried away Janaki. He won't be able to save his life anywhere. As a dying patient feels relieved by taking good medicine, so Janaki will surely be comforted by the news of our setting out for war and will keep her life. Today, reigns the star Uttara-phalguni and tomorrow the star Hasta will join the moon. Sugriva ! now let us start. Auspicious signs are to be noticed everywhere. The lids of my eye are throbbing. I shall surely be victorious and shall rescue Janaki after slaying Ravana."

At this, both Lakshmana and Sugriva were greatly pleased. Then Rama spoke again, saying, "Let the heroic Nila proceed in advance of the army, with hundreds of Vanaras for examining the route. O Nila ! lead your army through places where there is plenty of fruits and roots, where drinking water is clear and cool and where sufficient quantity of honey is obtained. The enemy may poison both food and drink, so be always on your guard for the safety of the army. Let the Vanaras reconnoitre the army of the enemy lying in ambush, by entering a deep forest. Let them stay here who are weak. You see the present task is to be achieved with courage and valour, so it is desirable to assemble a heroic army. Let the Vanara troops advance like waves of an agitated sea. Let Gaya, Gavaya, and Gavaksha go ahead like two proud

1 "And nectar" occurs in the original.

bulls. Let Rishabha protect the right flank and formidable Gandhamadana, like an infuriated elephant, protect the left flank. I shall ride on Hanuman's shoulders in the midst of the army and Lakshmana on that of Angada. We shall proceed encouraging the troops like Indra and Kuvera mounted on elephants. Heroic Jamvuvan, Sushena and Vegodarshi will guard the rear of the army."

Then Generalissimo Sugriva ordered the Vanara army to march. The Vanaras soon came out of their forests and caves. Rama proceeded towards the south with the army. He was surrounded by the heroic Vanaras and the mighty Vanara army followed him, and Sugriva took charge of them. Every one was glad and began to set up terrific yells. Some of them went ahead to remove all obstacles from the path. Some drank sweet-scented honey, some fed upon fruits and roots and some carried flowery trees in their hands. "We shall destroy the Rakshasas," the Vanaras begen to roar in the presence of Rama. In order to avoid all obstructions from the passage, the heroic Rishabha, Nila and Kumada went ahead with the Vanaras. Mighty Satabali guarded the army with thousand millions of Vanaras, Kesaris, Panasas, Gaja and Arka guarded the flanks with millions of Vanaras. Sushena and Jamvuvan protected the rear with thousands of Bhallukas. General Nila in order to prevent various sorts of troubles went along with the army. Valimukha, Prajangha, Jambha and Babhasa and others spurred the army for a speedy march. The vast Vanara host

advanced like an agitated ocean and overran villages and cities in their march. Rama riding on Hanuman's shoulders and Lakshmana on those of Angada, appeared like the sun and the moon under eclipse! All, however, felt happy.

Lakshmana, seeing auspicious marks all over spoke to Rama, "O Arya! you will soon recover Sita by destroying Ravana and return to prosperous Ayodhya. I have been seeing different signs on earth and in the sky.[1] The wind is sweet-scented and is gently blowing in favour of the army.[2] Birds and beasts are uttering sweet cries. All the quarters appear bright, the sun is clear and the planet Venus is bright, the polar star is shining in full. There the Ursa Major is revolving round them in brilliant light. Look, there is the Trishanku star; our forefather is shining along with the priest Vasishtha. Vishakha is the star of our line, look how it shines undimmed, and the star Mula fed by the influence of Nairit is being continually touched and scorched by the staff-like comet,—it is the star of the Rakshasas. In short, these things indicate the ruin of the Rakshasas. When one's doom draws nigh, the star of his line becomes oppressed by other planets. Now water is clear and sweet, and the trees are laden with various sorts of fruits and flowers. The

1 *The description appears to be anomalous. Both the phenomena of the day and the night are described at the same point of time.*

2 cf Meghaduta: "A favourable wind slowly and gently urges thee on."

vast Vanara host appears like the celestial army at the time of the destruction of the Tarakasura. O Arya ! just be cheerful at these sights."

At last the dust raised by the feet (and hands) of the Vanaras covered all quarters and the sun. Like clouds moving under the sky, they passed hills and forests darkening everything in their march, towards the south, halting from time to time in places or valleys with clear water, fruit-laden forests, and upon woody hills. Then the Vanaras indulged in various pranks by uprooting trees, tearing down creepers, and by climbing down rocks. Thus the Vanara host marched day and night. Their object was to rescue Janaki, so they did not want to take any rest. At a distance, the Sabya and the Malaya hills were seen. The Vanaras climbed them in joy. They disturbed the forest by their speed, and mineral dusts being gradually raised by the wind from the Tahya hill covered the army. Various kinds of flowers bloomed on the hill, Ketaki, Sinbhuvara, Vasavti, Kunda, Chiravillova, Madhuka, Vanjula, Vakula, Ranjaka, Tilaka, Naga, Cheeta, Patalika, Kovidara, Mucha, Arjuna, Sinshapa, Kutaja, Hintala, Tinieha, Champaka, Kadamva, Nila, Asoka, Sarala, Ankula and Padmaka. The Vanaras were greatly delighted at their sight. The hill had beautiful lakes, which were visited by ducks, swans and the Chakravaks were full of the sweet fragrance of lotuses, lilies and other kinds of aquatic flowers. Deer an swine were roaming about hither and thithe

Some of the places were infested with lions, tigers and bears.

The Vanaras bathed in ponds and lakes and became sportive. They partook to their heart's content, fruits, roots and honey. Like fields with ripe paddy the hill grew brownish yellow with the Vanaras. After this the lotus-eyed Rama ascended the Mahendra hill. On getting upon its summit, Rama saw the vast ocean stretching far and wide, ever agitated by billows. Getting down from there, Rama entered the woods lining the shore, along with Lakshmana and Sugriva. The high waves of the sea were continually beating against the rocky shore. Rama arriving at the shore, said, "Sugriva ! we have reached the sea. My mind is filled up with strange thoughts. The other shore of this dreadful sea cannot be seen. It is impossible to cross it without a contrivance." Sugriva halted at the command of Rama and Lakshmana and the vast Vanara host in view of their colour, appeared like a second sea ! The heavy sound of their march drowned the deep roar of the sea. The army was divided into three divisions, and before them lay the far-stretched sea ever tossed by the wind. It extended unthwarted on all sides, no limit or bound was to be seen. It was full of fierce animals. It laughed with foam and danced with waves. The moon being up, the sea heaved in joy and the reflected moon danced in its bosom. The ocean was dreadful to look at like the nether region. Whales and Timingilas (devourers of whales) were swimming about hither and thither with great speed. Here

and there were huge sub-marine rocks.[2] They were luminous, as if sparks of fire had fallen on the sea ! The waters of the ocean were ever rising and falling. The sea was like the sky and the sky was like the sea ; there was hardly any difference between the two. The sky had stars, and the sea had clusters of pearls ; the sea had waters and the sky had clouds, the sky and the sea met with one another. Deep roaring of the waves due to their clash sounded like trumpets. The sea appeared to be angry, as if trying to rise and its deep roar thundered in the wind. The Vanaras in wonder stared at the sea with winkless eyes.

CHAPTER IV

IN SORROW

General Nila pitched his camp in due order on the sea-shore, and Mainda and Dwivida were patrolling round it for the encampment of the soldiers. In the meantime, Rama said to Lakshmana, "O my darling ! grief abates with time but since dear Janaki has been removed from my presence, my sorrows have been daily increasing. I am not so very sorry because Janaki is far away or that she has been stolen away by the Rakshasas ! I fear that her lease of life is limited. O wind ! blow there where Janaki is and breathe over me after touching her limbs. It

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1 We get in Greek classics expressions like "Wine-coloured," "Olive-coloured" sea.

2 Near Rameswaram Setubandha there are sub-marine rocks.

will be a source of consolation to me to feel the touch of her body in the wind and perceive her look in the moon. Alas! how bitterly Janaki cried uttering, "O Lord, O Lord!" when she was abducted. That thought burns me now. Her love burns me day and night, fed by the fuel of her absence. I shall enter into the waters of the sea; then love won't be able to burn me any more. This is enough for me that I am living along with Janaki on this planet—the earth. With this consolation alone I am keeping up my very life. As a piece of dry land becomes wet in contact with distant stream, so the news that Janaki is alive supports my life. Alas! when shall I see the lotus-eyed Janaki like royal fortune after victory in war? When shall I kiss those red lips after raising the countenance a little? When will she deeply embrace me with her throbbing breasts round like twin palms? Alas! she is passing her days like a husbandless woman whose husband I am. Janaki, the daughter of king Janaka, daughter-in-law of Dasaratha and my spouse, how is she passing her days amongst the Rakshasas? As the moon rises in the autumnal sky by peering through the banks of clouds, so she will rise in glory after the dispersion of the Rakahasas by my arms. She is by nature shy and merry but she has grown extremely lean in distress, and by fasting. When shall I banish my sorrows by piercing Ravana's heart with my arrows? When will that chaste lady shed tears of joy by embracing my neck? And when shall I cast off my sorrows like a piece of dirty cloth?"

By that time, the sun went down. Rama remained absorbed in Janaki's thoughts. He was somehow consoled by Lakshmana's words and then said his evening prayers.

CHAPTER V

RAVANA'S ANXIETY

Now, Ravana was extremely morose seeing the mighty deeds of Hanuman. He said with his head bent down in shame, "You see, it is not at all easy to enter this city of Lanka, but only a Vanara entered it, got sight of Janaki, broke down sacred edifices, destroyed heroic Rakshasas and devastated Lanka. Now what is to be done? Just decide what may be worthy and honourable for me. Heroes say, that victory is obtained by counsel. Now let us hold consultation over it. There are three kinds of persons in society : Good,[1] bad and indifferent. Without noticing their characteristics it is not possible to classify them. One should consult with friends and persons engaged in the same act and if necessary even other persons might be consulted. He who acts in consultation with persons, who has foresight[2] is the best of all. Next to him, is he who acts alone, waits for chance and alone plans war and peace. And he who does not weigh pros and cons about any thing, who neglects chance and who is indifferent about his duty is the worst of all. As there

1 Best and not bad and worst, in the original.

2 Divine Vision.

are three kinds of persons, so there are three kinds of counsels. When all agree to a counsel that is the best according to the science cf polity. That is tolerable or second in merit when there is at first a difference or divergence of opinion, each one holding his own and each debates in a different way, and that counsel in which there might be some agreement is the worst. You are intelligent, now do what you think best. You see Rama is advancing towards Lanka with a large Vanara host in order to attack us. It is not impossible for him to cross the sea either by physical prowess or by a miracle. He can bridge over the sea or make it dry. My ministers! such is the state of affairs. Now advice what will be the best from all points of view."

CHAPTER VI

VIBHISHANA'S COUNSEL

Then Nikumbha, Rasabha, Surya-satru, Suptaghna, Vajarkopa, Mohaparshwa, Mahodara, Agniketu, Durdharsha, Rashmiketu, Indrajit, Prahasta, Virupaksha, Vajradantra, Dhumraksha, Durmukha and many other heroes sprang forward with their arms. Glowing with enthusiasm and brandishing their weapons they said in a body to Ravana, "We shall surely destroy Rama and Lakshmana this day and shall cut in pieces him who has burnt down Lanka."

Then Vibhishana strove to pacify them and

requesting them to resume their seats said to Ravana with folded palms, "O king! war is the last resort for doing a thing which cannot be achieved by the ordinary policy of equality, magnanimity or that of discussion. One may attack for special reasons him who is infirm or besieged. But Rama is not a blunderer, he is wise, gentle and warlike. Why do you intend to attack him? Who could divine or know that Hanuman would cross this dreadful sea? O Rakshasas! it is not wise to despise an enemy's strength without knowing its true nature. Tell me what evil Rama has done to the Rakshasa chief. Why did he abduct his wife from Janasthana? Khara first created the disturbance by overstepping his limits, and that was why Rama killed Khara for it is one's duty in every respect to protect one's own life. Perhaps for the death of Khara, the Rakshasa king has stolen Janaki, but this act is highly reprehensible and this will bring about our ruin. I tell you again and again that it is best to return Janaki. What benefit will accrue to us from unnecessary quarrel with another? Rama is heroic and noble; it is not wise to incur his hostility. O king! I do implore you earnestly to restore Janaki to him. Return his Janaki before he reduces this prosperous Lanka to ruins, or before it is besieged by the Vanara host. I am your brother. This is why I am requesting you repeatedly. Give back Janaki before Rama discharges his irresistible arrows, bright as the

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1 This is how Antenor in the Iliad insisted for returning Helen to the Greeks.

glowing sun, for your sure death. O king! banish anger from thy mind; it destroys one's happiness and virtue. Keep up your honour, reputation and uprightness. Be thou pleased and allow us to live with our wives and children. Then the Rakshasa Lord, Ravana, on hearing these words of Vibhishana, entered his palace by leaving everybody there.

After this, the pious Vibhishana arrived at Ravana's palace next day early in the morning. It was massively built, high as a cliff and its spacious halls were symmetrically designed. It was guarded on all sides by a band of faithful men. It was peopled by intelligent and devoted followers, and its breeze was ever agitated by the heavy breath of infuriated elephants. Conchs and trumpets were being blown here and there, damsels were roaming about thither. Its spacious gate was made of gold and a number of people thronged in front of it in the public street. They were engaged in various sorts of idle discussions. The palace seemed to be the residence of the gods, Gandharvas or the Bhujangas.[1] Vibhishana in brilliant apparel entered the palace as the sun enters a bank of clouds. At the time of entrance, he heard the bards versed in the Vedas sing the glory of Ravana. He saw the priests, versed in Mantras, standing in a file with curd, clariffed butter, grains and flowers in their hands.

After entering the hall, Vibhishana approached

1 Mythical creatures superior to mortals but literally means snakes.

the resplendent throne of Ravana and bowed to him and after showing his honours to the king, he sat upon a golden seat as beckoned by Ravana. Then Vibhishana addressed the king in these well-meaning words, "O king! various kinds of evil portents have commenced since Janaki's arrival Fire. does not increase in volume though fed with sacrificial libations offered with *mantras*, before it is lighted it is clouded with smoke and afterwards it continues to emit smoke and sparks; reptiles are seen in places of worship and in sacrificial rooms and kitchens and in places where sacred fire is kept. Ants are found in articles to be offered in sacrifice, the cows have grown milkless and the elephants are without their temporal sweat. Horses are hungry and are neighing feebly. Asses, mules and camels are found to shed tears, and they cannot be cured even by treatment.[1] Ravens[2] in flocks sit upon the roof of the palace and cry themselves hoarse. Vultures stare even sitting on the roof of the palace! Jackals howl inauspiciously morning and evening coming near. Thundering cries of ravenous beasts are often heard at the city-gate. O king! in order to prevent all these evils return Janaki to Rama. If I have said anything against you through my ignorance, please do not mind it. All the Rakshasas and the Rakshasis will have

1 Please mark that there was veterinary science even in such distant past.

2 "The Raven himself is hoarse that croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan under my battlements."

—Macbeth.

to pay the penalty for his abduction of Sita. Though none of your councillors have advised you thus, I must tell you what I have myself seen and heard. I request you to listen to my friendly advice." On hearing this reasonable speech of Vibhishana, the Rakshasa king Ravana, glowed with rage and angrily said, "I do not see anything anywhere to be afraid of. It is not my desire to return Janaki to Rama. To speak the truth, even if he appears on the field of battle with the gods on his side he would not be able to stand my might." With these words Ravana curtly dismissed Vibhishana.

Chapter VII

THE COUNCIL OF WAR

Ravana was deeply fond of Janaki and was ever absorbed in her thoughts. He became daily afflicted by the consequences of his sin and by the remorse of his losing respect amongst his own people. He began to hold councils of war with his ministers and followers, though war was not desirable at all.

Ravana clad in gorgeous apparel got upon his car worked with pearls and gems and covered with golden net, drawn by well-trained horses and proceeded towards the royal assembly-hall and the Rakshasa warriors, armed with various weapons went before him. Elephants, chariots and horses followed him in files. Trumpets and conchs were blown aloud. Each gate of the city was thronged with troops. A

golden umbrella, like the moon, stood over his head, and on his two sides white *chowris* with filaments of gold were being gently waved. Hundreds of Rakshasas lined the streets, standing with folded palms. They greeted him with their salutes, sang his praise and prayed for his victory.

At a little distance stood the royal hall, built by Viswakarma, the architect of heaven. Its floor was paved with silver and gold, and in the middle stood a crystal dias[1] worked with gold. Four hundred Pisachas guarded that hall. Ravana arrived there with resounding air by the deep rumbling noise of his car. An excellent jewelled seat awaited him. That was covered with soft deer-skin and was furnished with pillows. Ravana after alighting from his car got upon that seat and addressing his emissaries said, "Some council about war is necessary. Just call the Rakshasas here."

On receiving the royal mandate, they all instantly dispersed in various directions and summoned the Rakshasas from their beds and gardens. Then some of the Rakshasas came on elephants, some on horses, some in cars, and some on foot. They bowed to Ravana, and he received them with due honour. They took their seats according to their respective ranks. There were councillors and others. In the meantime Vibhishana got down from a spacious car of gold, entered the hall, and greeted Ravana. Suka and Prabartha offered seats to the assem-

1 In some readings it is a coverlet and in some these descriptions do not occur at all.

bled persons. Every one had excellent apparel on, and was adorned with the gold and jewels. The scent of *aguru* sandal and of garland filled the air. Every one was silent and repeatedly looked at Ravana's face. They were war-like and carried arms. Thereupon Ravana, appeared like Indra amongst the Vasus. Then Ravana after casting his look round the assembly said to General Prahastha, "My fourfold forces are well-disciplined and versed in the art of war, now order them to guard the city with vigilance." Then Prahastha went out and stationing troops in every gate of the city within and without, hied back and said, "I have carried out your orders, now tell me what is your desire."

Then Ravana said, "You yourselves know what is good or bad, what is desirable or not, what will conduce to happiness in times of danger, and the action you decide on after due deliberation can never fail. To speak the truth it is due to your assistance that we are enjoying the kingdom with safety. The great hero Kumbhakarna sleeps for six months, and it is for this I did not then break his sleep. But he is now awake, as you know. I have brought hither Rama's beloved wife from Janasthana. That damsel is graceful, but she refuses to accept me. In the whole world there is none so beautiful like her. Her waist is slim, hips are heavy and her countenance is like the autumnal moon. She is glowing like an image of gold and quite startling like the magic illusion of Maya. The soles of her feet are reddish and soft and her nails are of pink hue.

She is radiant like sacrificial fire and glittering like the glowing sun. Her eyes are expanded, and her nose pointed. I have been simply bewitched. Love overcoming my feelings of anger is consuming my heart day and night. It is even eating into my gracefulness. Janaki has asked me to wait for a year for Rama, and I have agreed to her proposal. I feel quite exhausted for love, just like a tired horse. I know not how Rama will cross the dreadful sea with his Vanara host. Rather it is difficult to infer anything, since a single Vanara could commit so much mischief. Though we need not fear any man, yet decide according to your own intelligence what course of action is best. Formerly, I achieved victory in war against the Gods and the Asuras with your help. Now help me in this matter. I have received information that Rama and Lakshmana having heard about Janaki from their emissary's lips have advanced towards the sea with Sugriva and other Vanaras. Now, think of the means by which we can slay them and avoid restoration of Janaki. I never fear that a man will ever cross the sea with Vanara troops and conquer me. Not to speak of a man, none in the world will even dare do this. Surely victory is on my side."

At this, Kumbhakarana angrily said, "O king, the time for decision was already past the moment you abducted Janaki being bewitched with her beauty. There was time for our decision before that. Wise is that monarch who acts thoughtfully and never repents any deed done in indecent haste. In fact, it was

highly wrong of you to carry one s wife by force. If you but informed us before being engaged in that act, certainly some remedial means could have been found out. If any wrong act is done without any previous consultation, then it becomes a source of trouble like impure clarified butter offered in a sacrifice. The monarch who has no sense of what is to be done before and what is to be done after is devoid of any sense of polity. To speak the truth, for one who is so fickle, enemies always remain on the alert for his weak moments, though he might be exceedingly powerful. O king! you have acted without thinking about the consequence. It is rather your good fortune that you have not been yet destroyed by Rama. I shall, however, help you in battle and fight against Indra, Agni, Surya, Vayu, Kuvera and Varuna, or anybody else. I am huge as a mountain and if I rush with a bolt even Indra will be stricken with fear. Be comforted, I shall kill Rama before he discharges a second arrow after the first. I shall confer victory on you and shall devour the Vanaras. Banish your fear; eat, drink and be merry and do what is good. After Rama's death at my hands, surely Janaki will be yours."

The Rakshasas were foolish and short-sighted; they submitted to Ravana with folded palms, "We have enough of arms and troops, so we do not see any cause of remorse. Thou hast conquered the Uragas of Bhogavati and captured Pushpaka-Ratha by defeating Kuvera, the Yaksha king, who resides in the Kailasa mountain

and takes pride in his friendship with the divine Lord Mahadeva. The Danava king, Maya, in order to live in friendship with you has conferred on you his daughter Mandodari. He is proud and mighty, but thou hast humbled his pride in battle. You have subdued the Naga king, Vasuki, Takshaka, Sankha and Jati in the nether region. The Danavas known as the Kaikeyas who are haughty for the boon they obtained from the gods and are invincible were defeated by you after a year's struggle and you learnt magic from them. The sons of Varuna are exceedingly powerful, and they came to fight with their divisions of fourfold forces, but were defeated by you. The might of Yama is like that of the ocean, his mace is like fierce crocodiles and sharks, his noose like violent waves, his servants like snakes, fever is like fierceness of the sea. You boldly plunged into that sea and prevented death. Everybody, every Rakshasa, is pleased with your gallant warfare. There are innumerable formidable Kshatriyas, and Rama cannot be in any way superior to them, and you conquered them all with your might. Now, why should you bother seriously at all? Be comforted. Indrajit alone will conquer the Vanara host. He has obtained a rare boon from Rudra, the God of gods, by performing an excellent sacrifice. Once the heavenly hosts were chastised by this hero. He took Indra as a prisoner of war, who was at last released at the request of Brahma, the Grand Sire of creation. O king! now commission Indrajit; he will be able to achieve

the object. The present trouble has been caused by a common human being. There is no special cause of anxiety. Surely, Rama will meet with death at your hand.

Then general Prahastha dark like a cloud, said to Ravana with folded palms, "O king, what to speak of man. I myself can subdue the Suras, Asuras and the Gandharvas. When we were indulging in pleasure and luxury from a sense of security, then Hanuman deceived us by entering the city. Now that villain will not escape punishment, so long as my life is in me. Just order me. I shall denude the world of all the Vanaras. I shall protect you from the fear of the Vanaras. Rest assured, nothing untoward will happen to you for the crime of abducting Sita."

Then the heroic Durmukha gently said, "O king, we can never brook any defeat from the Vanaras. I shall save you from the Vanaras by destroying them all alone whether they enter the sea, or fly in the sky, or hide themselves in the nether regions. There is no escape from my hands."

Thereafter the war-like Vajradanstra angrily broke forth taking up the *parigha* weapon stained with blood and fat, "O king, what accrues by killing poor Hanuman while Rama and Lakshmana and Sugriva remain untouched. To speak the truth, I shall alone dispense with the Vanara host by this lance and slay those three villains. My liege, I have another thing to submit. Victory attends him who is energetic

and skilful. I am now speaking about that device. You see the Rakshasas are adept in black art and mighty. Let them assume human forms and appear before Rama and tell him distinctly, "O prince! Bharata has sent us for your help." On hearing this Rama will at once come to Lanka with his army. Then we shall attack him on half-way and destroy his army with our weapons and shall shower on them arms and stones by stationing ourselves in the sky."

Thereupon Nikumbha, son of Kumbhakarna observed with angry look, "Ye Rakshasas, live in peace with our lord. I shall alone destroy the Vanaras along with Rama and Lakshmana."

Then Vajradanstra said, "Remove your lethargy, be up and doing about the achievement of your object. I shall alone devour all the Vanaras. Go and drink to your heart's content. I shall destroy the Vanaras this very day."

CHAPTER VIII

THE DEBATE

Then the heroic Prahastha after a moment's thought said, "O king! he must be a foolish person who does not drink what he finds within his reach after entering into a dense forest full of ferocious animals. Enjoy yourself with Janaki at ease, setting your feet on Rama's head.

Behave like a cock and attack her again and again. What fear is there after the gratification of your desire? If there arises any cause of anxiety at all you will be quite competent to ward that off. The great heroes, Kumbhakarna and Indrajit, can subdue even Indra. Equity, magnanimity, dissensions and punishment are the four means of accomplishing one's object. Of these we adopt chastisement as our means. To be brief, our enemies will surely be vanquished by our prowess."

Then Ravana praised Prahastha and said, "O hero! just hear an incident of old. Once upon a time, I saw a nymph named Pejrker going to Brahma. She was bright like a burning flame. At my sight, she hid herself in fear. But I at once caught hold of her and made her naked. After that she went to Brahma like a crumpled lotus. Hearing of my conduct from her lips, Brahma uttered a curse, "Thou wicked soul! henceforth if you apply force against any woman, your head will be sundered into pieces." Since then I am living in fear of that curse. That is why I do not employ force against Janaki. My might is like that of the ocean, and motion is like that of the wind. Rama is quite ignorant of my prowess, hence he is proceeding towards Lanka. Who dares to provoke a sleeping lion awaiting like Death in its den? Rama is advancing because he has not yet seen my arrows like dreadful unsubdued snakes. As the sun robs the stars of their light, so I shall rob him of his prowess. Even the thousand-

eyed Indra and Varuna cannot subdue me. This city once belonged to Kuvera ; I have occupied it by my own valour."

Then the noble Vibhishana said to Ravana, "O chief of the Rakshasas! Janaki is like a dreadful snake ; her body is like that of a snake, her thought is poison, her smile is like fangs and the five fingers of her palm is like five hoods! Why have you tied this fatal snake round your neck ? Before Lanka is besieged by the formidable Vanaras, restore Janaki to Rama. Before the heads of the Rakshasas are lopped off by the sharp arrows of Rama, return Janaki to him. Surely, Kumbhakarna, Indrajit, Mahodara, Nikumbha, Kumbha and Alikaya would not be able to stand before Rama. You would not be able to save yourself if you take shelter with Surya, Vayu, Yama or Indra, or hide yourself in heaven or in the nether region."

At this, Prahastha remarked, "O hero! in battle we are not afraid of even the Yakshas and Gandharvas. Why should we be afraid of Rama, a human being ?"

Then the pious Vibhishana said, "Prahastha! what you, Mahodara, Kumbhakarna and the king have said about Rama will never be fulfilled, like salvation in the case of a sinner. There is none amongst us who can slay Rama. Is it possible to cross the ocean in a raft ? Rama is virtuous and highly accomplished, he is born of the Ikshvaku line, even the gods are outwitted by him. Prahastha! you are boasting simply because Rama's arrows have not yet

pierced your heart. Rama's shafts are absolutely fatal and like thunderbolt. How will you be able to stand the might of Rama ? To speak the truth, you are enemies of Ravana in the guise of friends. You are advising him thus simply for the destruction of the Rakshasa race. Ravana is in the coils of a formidable serpent with a thousand hoods. Just save him from that fatal snare. He is about to be drowned in the sea of Rama's prowess; just drag him up by his hair. I have expressed my candid opinion without any fear and I ask you to return Janaki to Rama. This will be good for the Rakshasas as well as for the king. He is a just councillor who advises his master after properly ascertaining the prowess of the enemy and of their own."

Then Indrajit, hearing this speech of Vibhishana, looking like the preceptor of the gods, said, "O uncle ! why do you speek like a panic-stricken fellow ? Even he who is not born of the Rakshasa race could not speak like this, could not have acted like this. Heroic valour, might and energy of our family are not to be found only in you. What to speak of the Rakshasas as a whole, any ordinary person can slay those two princes. Then why do you frighten us thus ? Indra is the king of the gods and I brought him down as a captive on earth, and the gods in fear dispersed in disorder at that sight. I plucked the tusks of the heavenly elephant Airavata. I am the terror of the Danavas and have humbled the pride of the gods. Shall I then be now afraid of these two men ?"

Then the heroic Vibhishana said to the spirited Indrajit, "My dear son ! you are yet a boy. Your intellect has not yet been ripe, and you have little knowledge about what is to be done or not. You are talking like this for your own destruction, as being the son of Ravana, you are not preventing him from such a dangerous act. You are his son only in name, rather an enemy in the guise of a friend. You have been possessed by an evil genius. You are young and rash. Both you and he who has summoned you to this council will be destroyed by Rama. Rama's arrows are quite fatal and can reduce the world into ashes. Who will be able to stand them ? O Rakshasa chief ! go and pacify Rama by returning Janaki adorned with jewels. Let us live peacefully in Lanka."

Thereupon the evil-minded Ravana said these harsh words to Vibhishana in anger, "It is better to live with an open enemy, or even with an angry serpent, than with a secret enemy in the guise of a friend. I am not ignorant of the (treacherous) nature of kinsmen—one is delighted at the ruin of another. They hate him most who is the best amongst them, who is virtuous and mighty. Even if he be the pillar of the state. and if he be a hero, they wait to pounce upon him in an opportune moment. The hearts of these treacherous fellows are full of deceit and are really dreadful. I shall now narrate what some elephants are said to have remarked at the sight of a man with a noose amongst the lotuses." The elephant said, "We are not so much afraid of fire weapons or noose as of our selfish kin. It

is they who tell others the ways of taking us captives. Therefore kinsmen are to be feared most of all. As milk is to be found in a cow, fickleness in a woman, and meditation in a Brahmana, so the cause of fear lies in a kinsman. Vibhishana! perhaps you cannot bear that I am lord of immense riches, and the vanquisher of my enemies over the three worlds. Friendship with a villainous person is as unstable as a drop of water on the leaf of a lotus. It rains or thunders like an autumnal cloud, but can never make beings quite wet. As an elephant soils his body after bath, by blowing dust with his trunk, so a villainous person uproots his former love or affection. As a snake hastily leaves the flower by sucking its honey, so friendship with a villainous person quickly terminates, and it is fruitless, just as a bee is disappointed ever of a drop of honey, however much it gnaws at the Kasha flower. Shame unto you! had it been anybody else, I would have at once cut off his head for talking like this."

Then the truthful Vibhishana, hearing such harsh expressions of his elder brother, stood up with a mace in his hand along with four Rakshasas, and angrily said, "O king! you are my elder brother, and so respectable like father, but you have no religious insight. You are greatly mistaken; do what you like, but I shall not brook all these harsh expressions. I told you what was good for you. Only one whose end is nigh could be offended with my words. It is easy to speak what one is delighted to hear, but he is rare who dares speak an unpleasant thing but

meant for good, as well as he who can listen to them. How could I be indifferent about your distinction like that of a brilliant plant ? And could I indifferently look with my own eyes, you being slain by the arrows of Rama. Even he who is a great hero and skilful in the use of arms crumbles like a bridge of sand at the approach of his doom. You are my superior. Please forgive me for what I have said for your own good and be mindful about your safety. O king ! I leave you now, may you be happy without me. O king, I asked you to forbear for your own welfare. I opposed you for your good, but that was quite unpalatable to you. To him whose end draws near, the word of a true friend becomes unpleasant and disagreeable."

CHAPTER IX

THE CONSULTATION

After saying hard things to Ravana, the noble Vibhishana instantly appeared before Rama and Lakshmana. He was shining like lightning. The Vanaras espied him above the sky. Vibhishana had four followers with him ; they were clad in excellent apparel and equipped with armour and weapons. Seeing those five Rakshasas from a distance, Sugriva became anxious, and pointing them to Hanuman and others said, "Look there ! an armed Rakshasa with four others is coming to be killed." As soon as the Vanaras heard those words, they uprooted

stones and trees and said, "Just order us, we shall kill those rascals without delay. They will surely give up their ghosts."

Then Vibhishana arrived at the northern shore of the sea. He was calm and fearless, and appearing before Sugriva, said in a deep voice, "There is a wicked Rakshasa named Ravana. He is the chief of the Rakshasas and I am his youngest brother named Vibhishana. He has carried off Janaki from Janasthana by killing Jatayu. Now that poor lady is confined within his palace and is always guarded by hundreds of Rakshasis on all sides. I repeatedly requested Ravana to return Janaki, but his doom being near he did not listen to well-meaning words as a dying man refuses to take medicine. He abused me and insulted me. Now having abandoned my wife and children, I have sought your shelter. Rama is the refuge of all ; go and tell him that Vibhishana has come."

Then Sugriva hastily appeared before Rama and Lakshmana and angrily said, "Some one from the enemies has unguardedly entered in the midst of our army. He will kill the Vanaras in on opportune moment as Uluka destroyed the Vayasas. We ought to be careful about our consultations and actions about ourselves and the enemy. The Rakshasas are warlike and can assume different forms at will. They do injury to others by remaining concealed and by adopting crooked policy ; so they should not be believed. This newcomer is certainly a spy of Ravana, if he can once get his admission here,

he will witness discussion amongst us, or when we shall be off our guard from our sense of confidence in him, this shrewd fellow will cause our destruction. We should collect friends and not enemies. The newcomer's name is Vibhishana : he is Ravana's youngest brother. They are our enemies, how can we believe him ? That fellow, at the instruction of Ravana, along with four persons, has sought your protection. It is proper to kill him now. When you will bask in his confidence, he will destroy you ; so it is desirable to kill him now by striking him violently." General Sugriva became silent after expressing his opinion thus in anger.

Thereupon the noble Rama said to Hanuman and other Vanaras, "You have heard the reasonable speech of Sugriva which he has just now made about Vibhishana. He who wants abiding prosperity should give advice even to accomplished friends. Now I want to know your opinion in this matter." Then the well-wishing Vanaras said to Rama, "O hero ! There is nothing unknown to you in the three worlds. You are now speaking thus simply to honour us and out of your regard for friendship. You are wise and considerate and you have great confidence in your friends. Now let the wise counsellors express their individual opinions before you."

Thereupon Angada remarked, "O hero ! Vibhishana has come from the enemy's camp ; therefore there is much to be believed. Treacherous people conduct themselves deftly and

they strike whenever any opportunity presents itself to them. Such a thing is dreadful. It is proper to act after considering the pros and cons of everything. One should be sought for for his virtues and abandoned for his vices. You should forsake Vibhishana, if you find any great fault in him or take him in if he possesses some great virtue."

The heroic Sharabha said, "Immediately engage spies to watch Vibhishana. First let him be thoroughly tested by keen spies, and then accept him."

Thereafter the wise Jamvuvan after quoting the Shastras said, "Ravana is our mortal enemy and Vibhishana is his brother, so there is much to fear."

Then Mainda after deliberation said, "Rama! Vibhishana is Ravana's brother, first ask him everything in gentle words. First test him and see whether he is wicked or not, then do what you intelligently decide to be done."

Then Hanuman versed in the Shastras, the chief of the counsellors said, "Rama! You are wise, intelligent and a speaker. Even Vrihaspati, the preceptor of the gods is no match for you in eloquence. Now I am telling you something, not being inspired by any ambition for eloquence, or vanity, but in course of duty. I cannot approve of what has been advised by your ministers for testing Vibhishana. In the first place no such thing is possible. It is not possible to verify or test anybody without engaging him in something, but such sudden commission

is not proper. As regards setting spies on him, it is useless to employ such spies when a thing is quite palpable. I have something to say about time and place which has been just now observed. Just listen to me. Vibhishana has arrived in right time and place. Ravana is vicious, whereas you are virtuous ; he is wicked, you are faultless and heroic. That Vibhishana after examining these things has come to this place is quite becoming of him. I have something to add after Mainda's suggestion for testing Vibhishana by spies. You see whenever anything is asked, an intelligent person grows anxious. Some real truth may thus be gathered, but if the newcomer be a friend or if he seeks happiness, he will feel annoyed by such fruitless scrutiny. It is absolutely an unfounded assertion to say that an enemy's intention can be gathered by merely questioning him. You yourself talk to him and gather his real intentions from his voice. To speak the truth, when Vibhishana introduced himself, no trace of wickedness could be detected. Even a satisfied look was seen then. How could I suspect him ? He who is treacherous can not appear to be quite hale and cheerful. Vibhishana's words were not in any way diplomatic. Then how could I suspect him ? It is not all easy to conceal one's real motives ; they perforce reveal themselves. This action of the heroic Vibhishana is not in any way unnatural. Vibhishana after considering your military preparations, Ravana's vanity of power, death of Vali, and the coronation of Sugriva has wisely come hither for the

throne. If we consider all these things, it is desirable to take him in. Rama! you are wise. I have said this, noticing the sincerity of Vibhishana. Now do what you think best."

Then Rama versed in the Shastras cheerfully observed, "O Vanaras! you are my well-wishers. I shall tell you something about Vibhishana. You see Vibhishana has come as a friend. Even if some fault may be detected in him, still I cannot forsake him now. It is ignoble for the good not to give shelter even to a bad man if he seeks protection."

Thereupon Sugriva said with reasons, "It is not at all proper to take him in, whether he is good or bad, who forsakes his brother in times of danger. For what guarantee is there that he will not desert us in peril.?"

Then Rama after casting his look at the Vanaras with a smile said to Lakshmana, "What my friend Sugriva has observed cannot be spoken by anybody unless he is well-versed in the Shastras and devoted to the aged. But I know there are two kinds of reasonings, one popular and the other subtle, to account for the separation between brothers amongst the kings. I shall mention that now. There are two kinds of enemies, one is a kinsman and the other one is a neighbour. Those two commit mischief whenever they get any opportunity. Those who wish well are sought for by the people, but sometimes they are discarded by the kings. Hearing this Vibhishana has come here. What you have pointed out about the faults of taking

in one's enemy has its other side too. If the brothers live in amity, there may exist love between them or there will ensue quarrel and fight. Now Vibhishana has quarrelled with his brother, hence, he has come here. He is Ravana's brother, so he should be killed with Ravana."

Rama further said, "Vibhishana may or may not be silly in mind but he would be able to do me the least mischief. I can destroy all the Rakshasas at ease. I have heard that once a hunter previously killed the pigeon's mate, but seeing him taking shelter under that tree, the pigeon received him hospitably and gratified him with his own flesh. If a bird's attitude towards its enemy be such, then how can a man like me behave otherwise ? Let me tell you what has been sung by truthful Randu, the son of Maharshi Kanwa. He says that if an enemy ever seeks protection with folded palms, you should give him shelter. It is the duty of the virtuous to protect his enemy, be he cowardly or haughty, if he takes shelter being oppressed by another. He commits a great sin who does not either through fear or intentionally give shelter according to his power to him who seeks his protection, and he incurs ill-fame. If the person who has taken refuge is destroyed in the presence of him, then all the sins of the refugee will be heaped upon the head of his protector. Vanaras ! all these evils occur when one forsakes him who asks for protection, and these stand in the way of salvation. Henceforth I shall act like Randu and shall give him

protection whoever will declare that he is mine. O Sugriva, bring soon Ravana or Vibhishana, whoever he may be, I shall give shelter to him."

Still Sugriva said, "Rama ! You are virtuous, honest and there is nothing to wonder that you will speak like this. Hanuman has examined him carefully and I am sure he is truthful and pure. The virtuous Vibhishana is wise, let him come here and be friendly with us occupying the same position as we do."

Chapter X

MEETING WITH VIBHISHANA

Vibhishana thus being exceedingly delighted by the assurances of Rama cast his looks down towards the earth and alighted from the sky with his four faithful followers. He bowed down to Rama and his followers also did so in their turn.

Vibhishana then said to Rama, "Rama ! I am the youngest brother of Ravana ; he has insulted me greatly. Thou art the shelter of all, so I have sought thy protection. I have renounced all the wealth and pleasures of Lanka, my life and happiness are at your disposal."

Thereupon Rama looked at Vibhishana with eager eyes and said, "Vibhishana ! just tell me about the strength of the Rakshasas."

Vibhishana said, "O prince, the Rakshasa

king Ravana has been rendered indestructible by the boon of Brahma. His second brother is Kumbhakarna who is even a worthy match of Indra on the field of battle. I am the youngest, Prahastha is the commander-in-chief of Ravana. He defeated Manibhadra on the Kailasa mountain. The heroic Indrajit is his son. He fights by putting on impenetrable armour, and gloves of cow-hide for the protection of his fingers, and while engaged in fighting he would make himself quite invisible. This hero by pleasing the god of fire can render himself invisible and fight terribly against the enemy's host. Mahodara, Mahaparswer and Akampana are the commanders of Ravana. Their might is like their master's. Ravana's crack army will be about tens of billions. They live in Lanka and feed upon flesh and blood. Ravana fought against other kings with this army, and none can stand his assault ; even the gods flee away in fear."

Having heard all this Rama weighed everything carefully in his mind and said, "Vibhishana! I quite appreciate what you have said about Ravana's prowess. But I tell you truly that I shall destroy Ravana with his sons and generals and shall invest the crown on you. Even if Ravana enters the nether region and takes refuge under Brahma, he will not escape with his life. I swear by my brothers I shall never return to Ayodhya without destroying him with his brood."

Then the virtuous Vibhishana, bowing to Rama, said, "I shall help you as much as it lies in

me to destroy the Rakshasas and to conquer Lanka, and I shall be henceforward the enemy of Ravana."

Rama then embracing Vibhishana in great delight said to Lakshmana, "Go and fetch water from the sea. I have been greatly pleased with Vibhishana ; crown him king."

Then the gentle Lakshmana at the command of his elder brother brought water from the sea and performed the ceremony investiture to the throne of Lanka. The Vanaras, seeing Rama thus behaving nobly with Vibhishana, chattered in joy and praised Rama. Then Sugriva and Hanuman said to Vibhishana, "O Rakshasa chief, just devise the means by which we shall be able to cross the sea." Then the pious Vibhishana said, "Let Rama seek the help of the ocean. The sons of Sagara opened this vast ocean. This Rama is a kinsman of the sea and the ocean will never be indifferent to Rama." Then Sugriva coming near Rama said, "Rama ! it is Vibhishana's desire that you should approach the Ocean for permission to cross the sea." Rama was greatly delighted at this good advice and with a cheerful face asked Sugriva and the active Lakshmana to arrange everything for his respectful reception and said, "This advice of Vibhishana appears to me to be very happy and proper. Sugriva is learned and you are also wise, do what you think best after consultation."

Thereupon Sugriva and Lakshmana in respectful words observed, "O worshipful lord ! what pious Vibhishana has advised is

certainly favourable to us. Even gods like Indra and others cannot reach Lanka without constructing a causeway over it. So it is necessary to work according to Vibhishana's instructions. It is improper to delay any further. Let us go and pray to the Ocean. Rama then sat on a *kusa* seat on the shore like a tongue of fire on the sacrifiicial altar.

CHAPTER XI

SUKA'S MESSAGE

Ravana had a spy named Sardula. Being commanded by his master he appeared on the sea-shore to reconnoitre the army commanded by Sugriva on the other side of the sea. He returned in great haste to Ravana and said, O King! the Vanara and the Bhalluka hosts are vast like the sea. They are advancing towards Lanka. King Dasaratha's sons Rama and Lakshmana are exceedingly beautiful. They have arrived at the sea-shore for the rescue of Janaki. The Vanara army has infested all quarters. It is necessary to assertain their number. Send emissaries to achieve your work by policy."

Thereupon, Ravana anxiously said to Suka, "Suka! go at once to Sugriva and tell him in sweet and gentle words, 'Sugriva! you are born of a royal family. You are the son of the Rikshaking and are heroic. You have nothing to gain or lose by helping Rama. Even if there is some question of gain, I too am like your brother. Though I have carried off Rama's wife, what is that to you? Go back to Kishkin-

dhya. Not to speak of the Vanaras and human beings, even the gods and the Gandharvas cannot come to the city of Lanka.' "

Then Suka assuming the form of a bird soon flew to the sky, and after traversing a great distance approached Sugriva, and without getting down he delivered Ravana's message to Sugriva from above. The Vanaras seeing him thus talking from the sky, by a mighty spring, caught hold of him to clip his wings and to kill him by fist-blows and brought him down on earth. Thus being oppressed by the Vanaras, Suka piteously cried out, "O Rama ! it is not proper to kill an envoy ; forbid the Vanaras. One who without delivering his master's message gives out his own views deserves to be killed."

The virtuous Rama out of pity towards Suka asked the Vanaras to desist, and the Vanaras let him off. Suka again got into the sky and said, "O King of the Kapis ! Ravana is cruel and treacherous. Tell me what I should say to him."

The heroic Sugriva then replied in a bold tone, "Deliver this message to Ravana on behalf of me, 'O Rakshasa king, you are not my friend, nor dear to me. I have no reason to be kind to you, nor are you my helper in any way. You are Rama's enemy and Rama will destroy you with all your kinsmen. O Villain ; we shall destroy Lanka with all the Rakshasas. There is no escape from Rama's hand whether you hide yourself in heaven or in hell or even if you

take shelter at the feet of the Divine Lord Byomakesa. I find none amongst the Rakshasas, Pisachas, Gandharvas or amongst the gods that can save you. The only proof of your valour is that you killed the old bird Jatayu, infirm with age. If you boast of your prowess, then why did you carry off Janaki in the absence of Rama and Lakshmana who are irresistible. Have you not yet understood that he will destroy you without fail ?" Then prince Angada said to Rama, "Perhaps, he is not an emissary, but a spy of Ravana. He has come here just to ascertain your strength. Whatever might be the result, capture him so that he may not go back to Lanka. This is my view."

Thereupon the Vanaras at once bound down Suka. Suka began to cry helplessly and the Vanaras began to beat him hard. Suka, being molested by the Vanaras, cried, "Alas, Rama ! the Vanaras have plucked my feathers and are piercing my eyes. I was born at night and all my sins will visit upon your head."[1]

Then Rama stopping the Vanaras said, "He is an envoy ; so let him go."

1 The belief was that if a person lost his life for no fault of his but at the connivance, or in the presence of another whose protection the former had sought all the iniquities of the former will visit upon the latter for this sin.

Chapter XII

THE EPISODE OF THE SEA

Then Rama lay down on the Kusa grass on the sea-shore, facing the east with folded palms. At that time his arm served for his pillow, formerly that arm was decorated with white and red sandal and various kinds of golden ornaments, it was repeatedly touched by the hands of his mothers adorned with pearls and gems, and, at night Janaki's beautiful head rested on it; that hand was like the serpent king Takshaka lying on the stream of the Ganges It was the protection of the sea-girt earth, it contributed to the sorrows of the enemies and to the delight of his friends. It was long like a bolt, reached up to the knees and this hand gave away hundreds of cattle in charity. Rama having made that right arm his pillow lay silently on the shore of the ocean, thinking that either he would achieve his object or dry up the sea.

Three nights passed. Rama prayed to the Ocean, but still the god of the ocean did not appear. Then his anger was up, and the ends of his eyes became red. Then addressing Lakshmana close by, Rama remarked, "You see, the god of the ocean has not appeared to me yet, how proud he is. Haughty people consider gentleness, forgiveness and sweet speech in good people as weakness, and are simply despised by them as signs of worthlessness. He who is haughtly, wicked or unrighteous, and who advertises his accomplishments, and he who

punishes another without judging his guilt or innocence, is respected by the people! Lakshmana! fame, victory and reputation cannot be won by gentleness. Now, it is necessary to display my prowess to the Ocean. This day by my arrows, the fishes will lose their lives and their dead bodies will choke the waters of the sea. I shall this day cut in pieces the trunks of the water-elephants and dry up the sea with its conchs and oysters. You see, the Ocean thinks me powerless, because I am forgiving. It is certainly improper to forgive such a person, my boy! Go and fetch my bow and snake-like arrows. I shall even now dry up the Ocean and the Vanara host will march over its dried bed. It is the abode of the Danavas, I shall surely agitate it."

Saying this, the heroic Rama took up his bow and arrow. His eyes grew dilated with rage, and he looked dreadful like the doomsday fire; and after bending his bow he discharged his shaft with a thundering boom, that seemed to shake the earth. As soon as the shaft was discharged, it burned with its own fire and in violent speed entered the sea. It heaved the ocean violently, thundering sounds were heard and the acquatic animals including sea-serpents were thrown up with great force, and the waves with sharks, crocodiles heaved up like the Mandara hill and burst into whirling eddies. A terrible confusion fell on all.

In the meantime, Lakshmana holding Rama's bow, seeking to stop him said, "O worshipful

lord ! it is not proper for you to smite the Ocean thus. A man like you is never swayed by passion. Now devise some means for the attainment of your goal." At that time the heavenly saints appearing in the sky began to dissuade Rama in loud voice.

Then Rama addressing the Ocean said, "I shall dry up the sea with the nether region. Its waters will be gone and dust will rise from its bed. The Vanaras will cross it on foot. It is due to its vanity that it does not pay heed to me."

With these words, Rama affixed an arrow to his bow and consecrated it with Brahma mantras. As soon as that arrow was drawn on the bow-string, heaven and earth began to shake, the planets began to revolve in wrong directions, the sky was covered with darkness, thunder began to peal again and again, and a heavy gale broke down trees. All the living beings shrieked in fear and invisible creatures filled the quarters with their cries. Many lay down trembling in fear. The sea overflowed its shores, but Rama was not at all moved by these.

In the meantime, the lord of the ocean appeared as the sun rises on the Udaya hill. His colour was of emerald green, he was adorned with ornaments, he wore a necklace of gems, and a wreath of flowers over his head, and his eyes were expanded like the petals of a lotus. Like the Himalayas, he was decked with the gems that grew in him. Waves broke into

eddies round him and he was surrounded by a cloud-like mist. Along with him there were the rivers Ganges and the Indus and many fire-breathing snakes. Approaching Rama, he said with folded palms, after greeting him duly, "Rama ! the earth, air, water, sky and light, being created by God, follow the course of nature as appointed by the Creator. Restlessness and fathomless depth are my two features. I cannot restrain my current on account of fear, or from love of gain. I shall bear whatever means you adopt for crossing the sea and the aquatic animals will not molest the Vanaras in any manner so long they cross the sea, and for the smooth crossing of all I shall remain as calm as a piece of land."

Rama said, "O Ocean ! My Brahma weapon is irrevocable, now tell me where I shall discharge it."

Then the Ocean looking at the weapon said, "Rama ! there is a place called Drumakulya just to my north ; fierce-looking robbers like the Abhiras live there ; they are vicious ; they drink my water and I can't bear their vicious touch. Discharge your Brahma weapon upon them."

Thereupon Rama discharged his dreadful shaft and the place where it fell became a desert. Mother earth was greatly smitten by that arrow, and water from the nether region began to swell up continually through that fissure caused by the Brahma weapon. That water-spring thenceforth came to be known as the

Vranakupa, and water even gushed through it like that of the sea. At that time, a terrible sound like the rending of the earth was heard. That sound and the arrow dried up the water. Then Rama, powerful as a god, blessed that tract saying, "Henceforth this tract will be healthy and salubrious for the animals; it will abound in fruits and roots. Flowers and milky and sweet-scented things and various kinds of medicines will be found here in abundance." In fact, owing to the blessing of Rama, the desert tract became an excellent place.

Then the Ocean, versed in all the Shastras, said, "O noble one ! blessed Nala is the son of Viswakarma and by the grace of his father, he has attained proficiency in the art of construction. You too love him dearly. Now let him build a bridge over me and I shall bear it ungrudgingly. Like the celestial architect, Viswakarma, he too is skilful in construction." Saying this, the god of ocean disappeared from there.

There heroic Nala standing up submitted to Rama, "O hero ! the god of ocean has stated the truth. I have received a boon from my father and for that I can build a causeway over this vast sea. Now it appears to me that punishment (force) is best suited for the achievement of one's object. It is not proper to be charitable or forgiving towards the ungrateful. You see the god of ocean disappeared in the depth from fear. Formerly, on the Mandara hill, my father Viswakarma said to my mother, "O lady ! your

son, in all respects, will be like me, I am Viswakarma's own begotten son, and I am like him. Not being questioned before, I did not speak anything till now. I shall build a bridge over the sea; let the Vanaras help me in this work even from this day."

Then the heroic Rama engaged the Vanaras in Nala's service. The Vanaras, huge like mountains, cheerfully entered the forest and brought down big trees on the shore. Gradually the shore became filled with salas, asvakarnas, dhavas, bamboos, kutajas, arjunas, palms, tilakas, Tinahas, Vilwas, Saptaparnas, Kamikaras, chutas, asokas and other trees. The Vanaras uprooted all the trees and brought them like the upraised flag-staffs of Indra. Dadimba creepers, cocoanut trees, vakulas, nimbas, kariras and bibhitakas were brought in large number. The big Vanaras plucked huge rocks and carried them with the help of machines. These trees and stones being hurled in great force into the sea, the waters heaved and fell alternately. In fact, the sea became greatly agitated by the hurling of stones and trees into it. The heroic Nala with the help of the Vanaras commenced building a hundred yojana bridge over the sea.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CAUSEWAY

Then with the help of the Vanaras the heroic Nala began to build the causeway hundred yojanas in length. Some of the Vanaras, to

be sure that the bridge is not bent, took up plumb-line and the requisite. Some carried huge slabs of stones, some of which were dark green like clouds and some black as rocks. They began to build with trees and stones, and all were animated with great enthusiasm and energy. Everywhere the Vanaras were seen carrying huge blocks of stones and trees, and there was a terrific din on account of continually throwing stones and trees into the sea. Everyone was eager to display his skill and energy. Thus, gradually, on the first day fourteen yojanas were built; on the second day twenty yojanas, on the third day twenty-one yojanas, on the fourth day twenty-four yojanas, on the fifth day twenty-three yojanas. Thus the heroic Nala with great skill, like his father Viswakarma, with the help of the Vanaras, built a beautiful bridge to the other shore of the sea. Then the long bridge shone like the milky way in the sky.

Then the denizens of heaven appeared in the sky to witness that wonderful bridge. The bridge, built by Nala was ten yojanas wide and hundred yojanas long. Everyone looked at it with eyes wide with amazement.

The Vanaras jumped in joy. That wonderful bridge was well-built, broad, and wonderful to look at and it appeared like the boundary line of the vast ocean.

Then Vibhishana, with mace in his hand and with his four counsellors guarded the southern end of the bridge so that the enemies might not cross the bridge. Then Sugriva said

to Rama, "Get upon Hanuman's shoulders and let Lakshmana get on the shoulders of Angada. The sea is far-stretched and these two Vanaras, rangers of the sky, will carry you to the other shore."

At the head of the army first proceeded Rama, Lakshmana and the heroic Sugriva. A vast host followed protecting the flanks and the rear.

Some of the Vanaras jumped into the sea, some went over the bridge and some flew above like birds. A deafening noise was produced by their march, which became mingled with the thundering roar of the sea.

Thus they gradually crossed the sea. The Kapi chief, Sugriva, settled his army in that tract abounding in fruits and roots. Then the gods and the demons, seeing this wonderful feat of Rama, approached him and reverentially said, "O king! may victory attend on thee, may you rule for ever this earth bound by the seas."

Thus the gods and saints began to praise Rama.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EVIL OMENS

Then Rama on seeing evil omens on all sides embraced the heroic Lakshmana and said, "Oh, my dear one! let us now take rest by encamping in this tract, a land abounding in fruits and drinking water. Evil omens presaging the destruction of good many people

are to be found everywhere. Dust-storm is blowing. There is an incessant earthquake and the peaks of the hills are fast trembling! The dark-grey clouds with thundering noise are raining blood. The evening looks dreadful and red like the red sandal-paste. Eruption is going on in the burning sun and ravenous birds and animals are piteously crying, looking at the sun. At night the moon is not visible much—its rays are hot and its disc appears to be dark and red, as if the moon has arisen for the destruction of the people. The sun is intensely glaring, its circumference seems to be red and a fierce blue spot is seen in the sun. The stars are enveloped in dust and vapour, as if the doomsday has come. You see, crows, vultures and hawks are flying about hither and thither. The jackals are howling presaging evil everywhere, Lakshmana! The earth will now be covered with the arms of the Vanaras and Rakshasas and their dead bodies, drenched with their blood. Let us today force our way with the Vanara hosts into Lanka—the city of Ravana."

Saying this, Rama first proceeded towards Lanka holding a bow in his hand, Vibhishana, Sugriva and others following him with heroic roars. The Vanaras grew determined for the destruction of the Rakshasas. At that time Rama was highly pleased with the patience and work of the Vanaras.

Chapter XV

THE PREPARATION FOR FIGHT

Then Rama drew up his army in battle array. As the autumnal night looks beautiful with the full moon, so that vast host was graced by the presence of Rama. The earth shook and became highly oppressed by the vast Vanara hosts—stretching far and wide like the sea. At that time, a great noise prevailed in Lanka, and the sounds of trumpets and *mridangas* were continually heard. The Vanaras were greatly delighted at those sounds and uttered heroic yells in joy. The Rakshasas heard that thundering roar like the rumbling of distant clouds.

Then Rama, on seeing Lanka decked with flags began to think in a sorrowful mind, "Alas! the gazelle-eyed Janaki is confined there like the star Rohini overshadowed by planets." Then heaving a deep sigh, Rama addressing Lakshmana said, "My boy! just see this city of Lanka kissing the sky,[1] as if the heavenly architect Viswakarma from his imagination has built this city upon the high hill. Seven-storied building white as the fleecy clouds stand everywhere in the city. Beautiful parks and gardens decorate the city. The birds are chirping in those beautiful gardens and the leaves of the trees with bees clinging to them are gently waving in the breeze, and the woods are echoed with the sweet notes of cuckoos."

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1 It reminds us of the sky-scrapers of New York.

After this, Rama dividing his army according to the directions of the Shastras, said, "The heroic Angada and Nila would remain in the middle with their armies. The heroic Rishabha will protect the right flank of the army, and Gandhamadana its left flank. And I shall with Lakshmana remain on the front. Let Jamvuvan, Sushena, and Vegodarshi protect the centre, and the Kapi chief Sugriva will protect the rear, as the sun protects the western side of the earth."

Thus, Rama established order amongst the Vanara army and it appeared like a vast cloud. The Vanaras in order to crumble Lanka into pieces began to fetch huge blocks of stones and trees.

Thereafter Rama addressing Sugriva said, "My friend ! Our army has been divided according to the directions of the Shastras. Now let loose the Rakshasa Suka." Thereupon Sugriva released Suka at the command of Rama. As soon as he was released, Suka instantly ran to Ravana in fear.

Then, Ravana casting his look at him smilingly observed, "Have your two wings been tied, as if they have been torn off ? Did you fall in the hands of the Vanaras ?"

Then Suka replied, trembling with fear, "O king ! on arriving at the northern shore of the sea, I submitted to Sugriva in soft words all that you had said to me. But at my sight, the Vanaras were greatly provoked and they wanted to clip my wings and slay me with

fist-blows. My lord! the Vanaras are, by nature, very haughty and irritable. Not to speak of vanquishing them, it is even difficult to talk to them. That great hero, who has despatched Viradha, Kavandha and Khara to the realm of death — that Rama along with Sugriva has come in the course of his search for Janaki. He has crossed the sea by building a bridge over it and he does not care a fig for the Rakshasas. He is just waiting like a hero. Now the earth is covered with clould-like Vanara and Bhalluka hosts. Peace between the Rakshasas and the Vanaras is as impossible as between the Suras and the Asuras. Those troops will soon reach the city-wall. Either soon restore Sita or be ready for war."

Thereupon the Rakshasa king, with eyes red with anger, as if scorching everything with the fire of his wrath, said, "If all the gods and the Gandharvas stand against me, even if the Rakshasas be afraid to render any help to me, still I would not return Sita to Rama. My arrows will fly against Rama as intoxicated bees run towards the vernal flowers. When shall I scorch Rama with arrows discharged from my bow, like meteors burning down an elephant? When shall I eclipse Rama by my presence, as the sun robs the planets of their light when it rises in the sky? My irresistible course is like the sea, and I am as strong as the wind, but Rama is ignorant of this. Therefore he ventures to fight against me. Rama has not yet witnessed my arrows like venomous snakes. And so he has ventured to take up arms against

me. Entering the arena of battle I shall play on my bow as upon a stringed musical instrument. The shaft is like the staff of a Vina, twang is its sound, cries of men are its music, Narach and the sound of Tala are like keeping of time. What more shall I speak of my prowess? Even, the chief of the gods, Indra, Varuna[1], Yama[2] and Kuvera[3] cannot vanquish me."

Chapter XVI

THE ESPIONAGE

Then Ravana, after calling his counsellors, Suka and Sarana said, "You see, to build a bridge over the sea and for the Vanaras to cross the ocean seem quite incredible. The sea is vast; how is it possible to build a bridge over it? How can we believe it? However, it is necessary to ascertain the number of the enemy troops. Go both of you, in disguise and ascertain the number of the troops and their prowess. Who are the chiefs of the Vanara army, who are the advisers of Rama and Sugriva? Who are in the vanguard and who are really heroic? Go and ascertain the real prowess of Rama and Lakshmana, the nature of their arms, and who is their Commander-in-chief."

Then Suka and Sarana, assuming the forms of two Vanaras, entered the camp of Rama's army. The Vanaras were quite formidable and

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1 Neptune, 2 Death and 3 the god of wealth.

countless, so Suka and Sarana could not ascertain their number. At that time, the Vanara troops settled themselves in hills, caves and by the side of fountains. Many were already there, many were coming, many were seated and many were about to take their seats. There was a deafening noise all around. Suka and Sarana watched everything incognito.

In the meantime, Vibhishana detected those two spies in disguise. He at once caught hold of them and produced them before Rama, saying, "These two persons are counsellors of Ravana named Suka and Sarana. They have come in disguise from Lanka and they are spies."

Thereupon Suka and Sarana were greatly frightened, and despairing of their lives they submitted to Rama with folded palms, "O hero! we entered the camp at the command of Ravana."

Then Rama, the benefactor of mankind, smilingly said, "If you have seen all the troops and have ascertained their real nature, if you have succeeded in carrying out the directions of your master, you may safely go. If you have still something to ascertain, you may again go on with your spying, or if you like, Vibhishana himself will show you everything. Do not be fearful about your lives because you have been secured. You are unarmed; besides you are envoys; it is improper to take your lives. Vibhishana! though they are spies and they have come to sow dissensions amongst us, still let them go. Go back and tell the Rakshasa king to display his

prowess with his friends and followers in any manner he likes in the field of battle relying on that prowess he stole my Janaki. I shall tomorrow morning, infest Lanka with my arrows. As Indra hurls the thunder-bolt against the Asuras, so I shall cast my arrows against Ravana."

Then Suka and Sarana, praising Rama, came back to Ravana and addressing him said, "O Rakshasa king! Vibhishana took us before Rama to put us to death, but the righteous Rama set us free. When such four mighty persons like Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Vibhishana have united together, not to speak of the Vanaras, they are sufficiently strong to uproot Lanka and replace in its original site. Not to speak of the other three persons, considering the image of Rama and the nature of his arms, he alone can reduce Lanka to ruins. The army that is protected by such heroes like Rama and Lakshmana and by the Vanaras like Sugriva, cannot be vanquished even by the gods. O king! they are gladly waiting for battle; you should not quarrel with them; rather you should go and humbly return Janaki to Rama."

CHAPTER XVII

RAVANA'S RESOLVE

Then Ravana, hearing everything from Sarana's lips, said, "You see, even if the gods, Gandharvas, and the Danavas attack me in a

body, if all the people get frightened, I shall not return Sita. You are extremely timid and have been greatly molested by the Vanaras. Therefore you speak like this and that is why restoration of Sita to Rama seems advisable to you. But tell me who can conquer me."

Saying this in anger, Ravana with Suka and Sarana ascended the lofty top of his snow-white palace for reconnoitreing the Vanara army. In front of him stood hills and forests and the wide expanse of the sea and its shore covered with the Vanara troops. Seeing that Vanara host, Ravana said to Sarana, "Tell me who are the chiefs amongst that army, who are really warlike, who are forward and who are encouraging them in everything ? The counsel of which hero does Sugriva follow ? What is their true prowess ? Tell me everything in detail."

Sarana said, "O king ! that hero who stands facing Lanka and is repeatedly uttering heroic roars, and thereby shaking the forests, hills and Lanka with its walls and gates, is the commander-in-chief of Sugriva ; his name is Nila ! Who is tall like a mountain peak, who is patrolling swinging his arms to and fro, who is yellow like the filaments of a lotus, who is emitting heroic yells in anger looking towards Lanka, and who is resounding all the quarters by lashing his tail repeatedly on the ground is Angada. Sugriva, king of the Kapis, has installed him as heir-apparent to the throne. He is like Vali and is dear to Sugriva ; Varuna fought for Indra ; so he will display his valour for Rama. He is challen-

ging you in a fight ; it is for his intelligence that Hanuman succeeded in gathering the whereabouts of Janaki. He has arrived here to attack you with a number of Vanara hosts. In his rear is the heroic Nala, who has built the bridge over the sea. The restive hero of silvery hue that you see at a distance is Sweta. He wishes to destroy Lanka alone with his own troops. Those residents of Chandana[1] who are roaring repeatedly are the followers of Sweta. He is intelligent and famous. Look how he cheers up the army by drawing them in battle array. There is general Kumuda, who rules over the woody Samrochana hill near the Gomati river. He whose long tail is covered with beautiful, long hairs is the heroic Chanda. He himself wants to reduce everything to ruin. He who has long yellow locks and is looking with burning eyes towards Lanka and who always lives in the Vindhya mountain, in the Krishna, the Sahya, and in the Sudarsana hill, is the leader of the army, named Samrambha. Look ! thirty million of formidable Vanaras have followed him for the destruction of Lanka. He who is thoroughly impartial amongst his troops and who is absolutely fearless and who in his anger casts a crooked look at Lanka is the warlike Sarabha. Look ! how he is brandishing his tail ! He resides in the beautiful Saleya mountain. Four million commanders are at his command. That stalwart hero towering over the Vanaras, like Indra amongst the gods, and

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1 Perhaps the country abounded in Sandalwood.

whose heroic roars are heard like the sounds of a trumpet is Panasa.[1] His place of residence is the Parijata mountain. Four million of commanders with their troops have gathered round him. He who is covering the sea-beach with his vast host and has filled the air with noise like the second sea, is the stalwart Vinata, tall as the Dardura mountain. This hero drinks from the Vena's stream. He has million troops. There stands heroic Krathana ! He is challenging you for a fight. His commanders are strong and warlike, and every one of them has his own troops. He, who in pride of his prowess, does not take anybody into consideration, is Gavaya. He is angrily advancing towards you. Seven million commanders are under him. O Rakshasa king ! there is no limit to the number of these commanders. They are highly powerful and formidable. I shall mention to you the commanders and the leaders who are ready to display their utmost valour for Rama. The hero whose tail is covered with fine hair, like the sun with rays and that which occasionally touches the ground is named Hara, millions of captains are ready to pounce upon Lanka at his command with uprooted trees. Those warriors who look like a bank of dark clouds are the formidable Bhallukas. They are innumerable like sands on the shore of the sea ; it is difficult to form a correct estimate of their prowess and valour. They live in tracts abounding in hills and rivers

1 In the original occurs a simile—"as a cloud overcasts the sky."

and Jamvuvan is their leader. This hero is quite dreadful to look at. As the god Parjyanya remains surrounded by the clouds, so he is ever surrounded by the Bhallukas. Jamvuvan lives in the Rikshyavana mountain and drinks from the stream of the Narmada. The name of his elder brother is Dhumra; in appearance he is after him, but in prowess he is superior to him. He is gentle and submissive to his superiors and is heroic. This wise leader helped Indra greatly in the war between the Devas and the Asuras and received his desired boon. His troops are countless—climbing the hills, they hurl huge stones as clouds. Those troops have absolulely no fear of death. In cruelty they are like the Rakshasas and the Pisachas, and their bodies are covered with hairs. The warrior who is sometimes bounding from the ground is named Rambha. He who always lives near the god Indra and whose troops are innumerable, is named Sannadan. He is the grandsire of the Vanaras. He touches the peaks by his flanks, and when he stands he is a yojana tall. Amongst the quadrupeds there is none so beautiful as he. Formerly there was a fierce fight between him and Indra, king of the gods, but he came out unbeaten. Look, there stands Kranthan. He was begotten by Agni in the womb of a Gandharva woman to help the Gods in the war between the gods and the demons. In prowess, he is like Indra; he resides in the Kailasa mountain, where Kuvera enjoys blackberries, and which is worshipped by the Kinnaras and he is king of the mountains. He is an attendant of

your brother Kuvera. He is the leader of a million Vanaras and wishes to destroy Lanka alone. There stands the heroic Pramatha, who roams on the bank of the Ganges by frightening the elephants, thinking of the former enmity between the monkeys and the elephants. He lives in caves and is a leader of the Vanaras. He breaks down trees into pieces and obstructs the passage of the wild elephants. This great hero lives in a part of the Mandara hill named Ushirvija ; millions of Vanaras follow him and they are all invincible. That is Pramatha who looks like a cloud roaring in wrath. There stands Gavaksha who is the king of the Golangulas. He has rendered great help in the construction of the bridge. Formidable white-mouthed Golangulas have surrounded him for the destruction of Lanka. There stands the great hero, Keshari. This great leader of the Vanaras lives in the beautiful Sumeru mountain, where plenty of flowers blossom, where the bees ever fly from flower to flower, round which hill the sun ever revolves, whose rays crimson the animals and birds, where there is plenty of honey, and whose peaks are never left by the saints. That hero is Satavali ; he lives in the Savarni Meru that stands in the midst of the sixty thousand golden hills. A vast number of white and yellow Vanaras have followed him. They have formidable teeth like those of lions and quite irresistible like those of tigers. These Vanaras are fiery like fire and dreadful like venomous snakes, their tails are unduly long and bodies are huge like rocks. They roam like infuriated elephants,

their voice is deep like the rumbling of the clouds, their eyes are round and their colour is yellow. They glare as if reducing Lanka to ashes. Satavali is the leader of these Vanaras. For victory he worships the sun. He is quite confident about his valour. He has staked his life for the attainment of Rama's object. Besides these great warriors, there are Gavaksha, Gavaya, Nala, Nila, Gaja and others and each one of them has been followed by a hundred million Vanara troops. Besides them there are so many warriors residing in the Vindhya hill that it is difficult to ascertain their number. They are huge like mountain and can within an instant reduce the world into atoms and dust."

Then Suka said, "Oh, king! the warriors whom you see seated in the front, who are tall like the mountain pines and strong like infuriated elephants, are the followers of Sugriva, the Kapi king. They are the residents of Kishkindhya. These Vanaras are quite formidable like the Asuras and Danavas and can assume any shape or form at their will. They fight with valour in the field of battle. They are millions in number and are born of the gods and the Gandharvas. Those two Vanaras are Mainda and Dvivida; none is their match in strength and valour. They partook of nectar at the bidding of Brahma. They think of reducing Lanka into ruins by themselves alone. The great hero that stands there like an infuriated elephant is Hanuman, the son of the Wind-god; he can even smother the ocean by his ire. He

came to Lanka to gather information about Janaki. He is beautiful and strong and can assume any form at his will. When he was a young boy, he once wished to devour the newly-risen sun, being tempted by its red colour. "I shall catch the sun crossing three thousand yojanas, since my hunger is not appeased by earthly fruits." Thus thinking he bounded up in the sky. But the sun is beyond the reach of the Rakshasas and the holy saints, and being unable to catch the sun he fell upon the Udaya mountain. His cheek-bone is very strong, but having fallen from such a height upon the hard rock, one of his cheek-bones has been broken; since then he is known as Hanuman. He is the eldest son of Keshari and is fleet like the wind. I know his history. It is impossible to describe his valour or beauty. He set fire to Lanka. Why does the king not recognise him? This hero can also reduce Lanka to ruins.

"By the side of Hanuman behold that lotus-eyed hero of green hue,—that is Rama. He is Atiratha[1] amongst the Ikshwakus. His valour is well-known. He never violates the dictates of religion, and he is foremost amongst those who are versed in the Vedas. He is the master of Brahma weapon. His shafts can pierce through the three worlds, the heaven, earth and the

1 Atiratha means a great hero, perhaps the greatest. On the eve of the battle of Kurukshetra, the great hero Bhishma classified the generals as Maharathi, Ardharathi, etc. Atiratha etymologically means who can fight alone against desperate odds.

nether region. His wrath is like that of the god of death and his might is like that of Indra. You have abducted his wife from Janasthana, and he has come here for battle. That hero seated at his right, whose colour is like that of varnished gold, whose chest is spacious, eyes beautiful and locks curly and of deep-blue hue, is Lakshmana. He is engaged for doing good to his elder brother. He is skilled in polity and war. He is the foremost of the heroes, formidable and victorious. He is the right hand of Rama, and his other self, as it were. He has staked his life for Rama. This hero can alone destroy the Rakshasa race. He who is seated to the left of Rama, surrounded by a few Rakshasa followers, is Vibhishana. Rama has invested him with the kingship of Lanka. He has come to fight against you out of pique. And the one whom you behold like a mountain amongst the Vanaras is Sugriva, the king of the Vanaras. Like the Himalayas amongst mountains, he is the foremost amongst the Vanaras in birth, rank, spirit, valour and fame. Impregnable Kishkindhya is his place of residence. In that hilly pass he lives with good many leaders of the army. On his neck hangs a golden necklace with hundred lotuses. That necklace is coveted by gods and men, and the goddess of wealth is there. Rama, after slaying Vali, has conferred that necklace, the Vanara kingdom and queen Tara on Sugriva. O king! a hundred[1] Lakhs make one Koti. One lakh

[1] One lakh, one hundred thousand, 100,000.

kotis make one Sankha, one lakh Sankhas make one Mahasankha, one lakh Mahasankhas make one vrinda, one lakh Vrindas make one Mahavrinda, one lakh Mahavrindas make one Padma, one lakh Padmas make one Mahapadma, one lakh Mahapadmas make one Kharva, one lakh Kharvas make one Samudra, one lakh Samudras make one Mahogha. The heroic Sugriva with a thousand Koti, a hundred Vrinda, a thousand Mahavrinda, a hundred Sankha a hundred Padma, a thousand Mahapadma, a hundred Samudra, and a thou sand Mahogha Vanaras, with heroic Vibhishana and counsellors has come for battle. The Vanara army are like burning planets, just watch them and be careful about victory."

Chapter XVIII

RAVANA SENDS OTHER SPIES

Ravana, on the instruction of Suka, looked at the Vanara leaders, the heroic Lakshmana, Vibhishana, Sugriva, Angada, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Sushena, Kumuda, Nila. Nala, Gaya, Gavaksha, Sarabha, Mainda, Dwivida and grew anxious. Great anger smothered his breast. He began to rebuke Suka and Sarana and they stood with downcast looks. Ravana then addressing them said, "It is not proper for any servant or dependant to speak anything unpleasant when his master is in trouble or in a state of fear. You have not learnt the true import of policy, in vain you did serve your

superiors and the aged ones, or it might be that once you learnt the true meaning of it but you have forgotten it now. You are simply carrying the load of ignorance. It is my misfortune that I am surrounded by such counsellors. I am myself the ruler, and good and evil of others depend upon my words. Are you in dread of losing your lives, as you are saying all these things to me? A forest-tree may not be consumed by forest-fire, but there is no escape of the guilty from the wrath of the king. You are praising the enemy and I forgive you at the recollection of your past services. So be off."

Then Suka and Sarana went out in shame, wishing victory to Ravana.

Ravana then asked Mahodara to summon some trustworthy spies. Mahodara sent for them at the command of the king and they soon appeared before Ravana with folded palms. They were cool and fearless.

Ravana addressing them said, "Go and watch the actions of Rama. Get information about the friends of Rama, who out of their love have come with him. Carefully ascertain how Rama sleeps, how he gets up and what he will do today."

Then those spies set out with Sardula at their head. Secretly they found out Rama and Lakshmana. Vibhishana detected them and captured them easily. Sardula was highly vicious and wicked. Vibhishana handed him over alone to Rama. The Vanaras began to beat him. The virtuous Rama released him out of

pity. The spies panting from thrashing returned to Ravana and told him everything in detail. Then Ravana, having learnt that Rama had at last arrived became anxious and said to Sardula, "Your face has grown pale, tell me, had you been a victim to the enemy's oppression ?"

Thereupon the frightened Sardula replied, "O king! the Vanaras are quite formidable and Rama himself is their protector; so it is difficult to gather any information through the spies. We cannot even speak to them, how can we question them ? As I was about to ascertain secrets of the army, the Rakshasas detected me, they dragged me out by showering upon me fists, kicks and blows. They took me before Rama. I was then bleeding from the beatings of the Vanaras and entreated them with folded palms to desist. Rama, at this stage suddenly espied me and at once cried out, "Ah! Ah! what are you doing?" Thus saying, he rescused me from the hands of the Vanaras. That hero having filled the sea with stones and hills has arrived with his army at the gates of Lanka. He is advancing towards Lanka by forming Garuda-vyuha.[1] He will soon reach the ramparts, so either return Sita or be prepared for fighting."

Hearing these words the Rakshasa king, Ravana, revolved in his mind a hundred things and said, "You have yourself seen the

1 A particular form of drawing the army in battle array. It means (in the original) that Rama drew up his forces in the form of a bird (eagle).

army, now tell me who is related to whom. I shall decide my course of action after ascertaining their strength. Those who want to fight ought to discuss these things."

Then Sardula said, "O king! Sugriva is the son of the Riksha king, Jamvuvan is the son of Gadagada, another son of Gadagada is Dhumra, Kesari is the son of Vrishasti and Hanuman is the son of Vayu, begotten in Keshari's wife. This hero came and fought against the Rakshasas in Lanka. Sushena is the son of Dharma; Dadhimukha is the son of the swift Brahma; he is like Death incarnate in the form of a Vanara. Commander-in-chief Nila is the son of Agni, the mighty prince Angada is the grandson of Indra. Mainda and Dwivida are the sons of Aswini. Gaya, Gavaksha, Gavaya, Sarabha and Gandhamadana are the five sons of Death (Yama). The ten Koti Vanaras are the offspring of the gods; it is not easy to trace their genealogy. That Rama who has slain Khara and Dushana, is the son of king Dasaratha. There is not a greater hero than he. It is he who slew Viradha and Kavandha. His accomplishments are manifold. He by his prowess destroyed all the Rakshasas of Janasthana. Lakshmana is like a tusker amongst the herd of wild elephants, even Indra cannot escape his arrows. Sweta and Jyotirmukha are the sons of Surya, Hemakuta is the son of Varunha, Nala is the son of Viswakarma and Dudhara the son of Vasu. Your brother Vibhishana is the foremost of the Rakshasas, he is engaged in doing good to

Rama and has invaded Lanka. O king! I have stated everything. They are now halting in the Suvela mountain. Now you are to decide what course of action is to be adopted."

CHAPTER XIX
THE ILLUSION

At this, Ravana grew extremely anxious and he summoned his counsellors. A deep consultation was held. After discussing with his ministers, Ravana entered his palace. Then he called a sorcerer named Vidyujjihva. He asked Vidyujjihva to create by magic the head and bow of Rama, and he would delude Janaki with these.

Thereupon, Vidyujjihva at once produced a magic head. Ravana was exceedingly pleased at that sight. He rewarded Vidyujjihva with ornaments and gold and he went to meet Janaki with it in the Asoka forest. On arriving there he found Janaki seated on the ground, and with pale and downcast looks she was thinking of Rama. Grim Rakshasis were trying to console her.

Ravana approached and haughtily broke forth in glee, "O Janaki! I have been humouring you in every possible way, but Rama for whom you are slighting my advances of love has been slain in battle. I have humbled your pride, I have uprooted your pillar of support; so be my wife; for there is no other alternative. Ah, my silly girl! give up your attachment for Rama. What will you gain by

thinking of him? He is dead. Be thou mistress over my queens. You are of little virtue and in vain do you brag of your intelligence. You are hopeless. Now listen to the tale of the destruction of your husband like that of the formidable Vritrasura.

"Rama, for my destruction, arrived at the sea-shore, with the Vanara troops mobilised by Sugriva. After the sunset he encamped his army on the northern side of the sea-beach. It was midnight and everyone was happily asleep from exhaustion. In the meantime some of my spies entered into the enemy's camp. Then the Rakshasa army led by Prahasta destroyed the army close to Rama and Lakshmana. They destroyed the troops with Pattisha, Parigha, Chakra, Rishthi, Danda, Kutamudgara, Tomara, Prasa, Dushala. At that time Rama was deeply buried in sleep and Prahasta with a quick hand cut his head with a stroke of his sword. Vibhishana was running away, but he has been captured by force. Lakshmana has disappeared with the Vanara hosts. Sugriva's neck has been broken, Hanuman's cheek has been shattered and he has met with death at the hands of the Rakshasas. Jamvuvan was about to rise, but he has been cut in pieces just like a log of wood: when Mainda and Dwivida were gasping and crying in blood-stained bodies they were cut down. Panasa[1] is even rolling in dust like the fruit of that name. Dadhimukha has been cut down by Naracha and is lying in the cave. Kumuda

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1 A jack-fruit.

has silently been laid low by arrows, and Angada after vomiting blood is lying prostrate. The Vanara hosts being trampled by elephants and chariots have dispersed like clouds. Some of them have run away being stricken with fear, and some of them are about to die. As the lion chases the elephants' herds, the Rakshasas pursued the Vanaras. At that some fell into the sea, some hid themselves in the sky and some of the Vanaras along with the Bhallukas climbed the trees. The Rakshasas have destroyed all the Vanaras in the forest, in the hills, and on the sea-beach. Your husband, Rama, with his army has been destroyed by the Rakshasa hosts."

With these words Ravana said to a Rakshasi, "Call that formidable Vidyujjihva, that hero will fetch Rama's head from the field of battle."

Then Vidyujjihva came with the magic head and the bow and stood before Ravana with folded palms. Then Ravana said, "Vidyujjihva, place Rama's head before Janaki, so that she may witness with her own eyes the miserable plight of her husband."

Vidyujjihva throwing the beautiful head of Rama before Janaki hurried off from that place. Ravana, too, threw down the shining bow saying, "This is Rama's head. The heroic Prahasta, after slaying Rama at night has brought thi bow and quiver of Rama ; be my wife."

CHAPTER XX

THE LAMENTATIONS OF JANAKI

Janaki with her own eyes saw Rama's head and his bow. She also remembered Hanuman's words to the effect that Sugriva had joined Rama for war. It was Rama's colour, his face, his hair, his bow, his eyes, and his diadem of the head! She examined the head carefully. She was overwhelmed with sorrow and began to abuse Kaikeyi saying, "Kaikeyi! your intentions have now been fulfilled; the heir of the Ikshwaku line has been destroyed. You are quarrelsome; therefore your line has come to an end. You sent Rama along with me in rags. Tell me what wrong did he inflict on you?" Then Janaki fell trembling on the ground and became senseless and after regaining her consciousness, she began to lament, "Alas! I am ruined. O hero! what a wretched plight I have been reduced to. Alas! I have become a widow. What worse condition might befall a woman than widowhood? That widowhood has fallen to my lot. You are of good character and I was devoted to you, but you have died before me! I am plunged into an ocean of grief, but alas, the one who would have rescued me is dead. Worshipful Kausalya is too much devoted to her son. Astrologers used to say that you were to live long, but now I find their words to be false; you are so short-lived. You were intelligent, but did your intelligence forsake you? Perhaps, it is due to evil moment. Time brings with it the consequence of our acts. You were

versed in polity, it is you who knew how to avoid danger; still I know not how you could die so untimely? Perhaps I am myself fatal night (death) that has brought about your destruction and my forced endurance. I am quite innocent, but you have embraced the earth by discarding me. I used to worship your gold-plated bow everyday with sandal-paste and flowers, but what an end it has met with! You have certainly become united with your father, Dasaratha, and your forefathers in heaven. It is a great virtue to fulfil the pledge of one's father, and surely for that meritorious act, you have been transformed into a star in the firmament. You are virtuous, but you should not have discarded your own family. O royal master! I am your wife, but why are you not looking at me or speaking to me? At the time of marriage, you took the vow that you would perform all religious rites with me. Just remember that and take this poor soul with you. I know not for what offence of mine you have repaired to the next world. Alas! the auspiciously decorated body that I was wont to embrace, is surely now being torn by dogs and jackals. You had performed with great pomp Agnishtoma and other sacrifices; then why was your body not burned by sacrificial fire? Now afflicted Kausalya will find only Lakshmana out of the three in exile. On her asking, Lakshmana will surely tell of the destruction of Vanara hosts in the hands of the Rakshasas at night. Alas! her heart will surely be broken hearing of your destruction and my confinement amongst the Rakshasas. I am

extremely unholy ; it is for me that that stainless hero, Rama, after crossing the ocean has been drowned in a ditch. He married me through infatuation. I am a stain to my race. I am death in the form of his wife. Perhaps, I did not give anything in charity in my prior birth, therefore I am lamenting even being the wife of the hospitable Rama. Ravana ! take me immediately to my dead husband and slay me over his corpse. Just do a piece of good work by uniting the wife with her husband. Let my body be united with his. I shall follow him."[1]

Thus, large-eyed Janaki began to lament bitterly at the sight of the severed head of Rama. In the meanime the gate-keeper came near Ravana and after wishing him victory said with folded palms, "O royal sir ! general Prahasta with the counsellors is waiting for you. I have been sent by him. Though I have come in an inopportune moment, still you will be pleased to forgive me, as a king. There is some pressing business, kindly grant them an interview."

Thereupon, Ravana left the Asoka forest and without any loss of time appeared in the Assembly Hall and held consultation with his ministers. And as soon as Ravana was gone, that magic head and the bow vanished in a moment.

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1 This does not allude to the "Sattee" rite which was at once a glory and a disgrace of Indian history. There is no reference on this horrible rite in the Ramayana, but on the contrary we find instances of widow re-marriage.

Ravana after consultation asked his commanders to mobilise the troops by the call of trumpets, but not to disclose the real cause of their mobilisation.

Thereupon, the royal messenger, mobilised the troops and informed Ravana of their arrival.

CHAPTER XXI

SITA AND SARAMA

Sarama, the Rakshasa lady, was a dear friend of Janaki. She found Janaki rolling in the dust, she was senseless with grief at the news of her husband's death. Janaki was under the spell of the Rakshasi-magic. Sarama consoling her said, "O Janaki! I have heard everything by remaining concealed in the forest. I have also ascertained the cause of Ravana's hurried retreat by going out myself. You see, Rama has neither vice nor indolence, nor he is too much addicted to sleep. The talk of fight during sleep is all false and it is not possible to slay Rama. As the gods are protected by Indra, so the Vanaras are protected by Rama. It is impossible to kill them by weapons or stones, his might is inconceivable and he is versed in polity. That victorious hero has not been slain. The haughty Ravana is given to evil deeds and is inimical to all living beings. That sorcerer has deluded you by his magic. Now all your sorrows will be over and your good luck is about to dawn. Let me give you a piece of good news, the heroic

Rama with Lakshmana and the Vanara troops, has crossed the ocean and has encamped on the southern beach of the sea. His object has been secured and he is defended by his own valour. The Vanara hosts are guarding him. Just now Ravana sent emissaries there, and they have brought the news of Rama's arrival. Ravana at this news has been consulting with his counsellors."

In the meantime, the deep roar of the army along with loud trumpet notes was heard. Then Sarama began to speak sweetly saying, "Listen to the deep trumpet call, like the rumbling of distant clouds, summoning the troops for battle. Preparation for fight is going on. The elephants have been ready and horses have been yoked to the chariots. Look, there the cavalry is galloping with lances in their hands. As swift floods fall with thundering sound to the sea, so the wonderful Rakshasa army is flooding through all highways and thoroughfares. As in summer the forest-fire appears to shine in various hues, so the various arms of the Rakshasas, shields and armours are glittering in various kinds of glare. The fourfold forces are ready for the war and are extremely restive. Just listen to the gong of the bells, the neighing of the horses, the rumbling sound of the chariot-wheels, and to the loud noise of the army. O Janaki! your fate has been propitiated and she is now favourable to you. Great panic has seized the Rakshasas. O lotus-eyed beauty! Rama's prowess and valour can never be described. As victorious Indra was united with Upendra

so Rama has become united with his brother Lakshmana. When he will come here by conquering the enemies, then I shall see you on his lap shedding tears of joy on his ample breast clasped in a deep embrace and your desire fulfilled. You have been wearing this single braid of hair reaching up to your thighs, but he will soon untie it. His countenance is beautiful like the rising full moon and you will shed big tears of joy at its sight. O sister ! Rama will shortly be happy by union with you, and you too will be happy with the loving caresses of Rama like the green earth smiling with corns due to rains.

"O worshipful lady ! just pray to him who revolves round the Sumeru hill like a horse, the sun, who is the sole remover of all sufferings and sorrows of the created beings."[1] As the clouds gladden the sun-burnt earth by pouring delightful rains, so Sarama revived the grief-stricken Janaki with her tender words, and by rendering good services in opportune moments. Sarama smilingly said, "My sister ! I may secretly go and inform Rama of your welfare and come back without being detected. When I shall soar along the unsupported sky, then even the eagle would not be able to overtake me."

Then Janaki being somewhat assured told Sarama in sweet and gentle words, "Surely,

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1 The sun at the centre of the solar sytem is not only the source of light, but according to science, is the source of life, thus along with it, of all joys.

my sister, you can roam along the sky and earth as you list, but let me tell you what is proper for me. Listen to me, if you really wish me good, and if you are anxious to do me some service, then go and please ascertain what Ravana is doing. That villain is cruel and deeply skilled in dark magic. His magic has indeed stupefied me like wine. These grim Rakshasis are ever threatening and scolding me. I have grown extremely anxious and sad in mind. Now go and find out if Ravana speaks anything in favour of my release, and this shall I consider as the greatest favour done to me."

Thus saying Janaki began to cry. Then Sarama wiped off the tears by the skirt of her cloth, and in gentle words said, "If you so desire, I shall immediately go to Ravana and come back soon with the news."

Then Sarama in disguise appeared before Ravana. That villain was then holding consultation with his counsellors, and she heard everything. Having ascertained the real state of things she returned to the Asoka forest, and found Janaki like the Goddess of beauty[1] shorn of her lotus-seat. She was waiting for her. Janaki, on seeing Sarama returning, embraced her affectionately and said with a trembling voice, "Dear sister! take your seat, tell me everything about the intentions of the cruel Ravana."

Thereupon, Sarama replied, "My sister! I

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1 Lakshmi means wealth, beauty and splendour,

found the royal mother and the counsellors inducing Ravana in various ways to return you with honour to Rama. The dowager queen said, "My boy! return Sita to Rama. The wonderful feat he has done in Janasthana is enough warning for you. The crossing of the ocean by Hanuman, his meeting with Janaki and the destruction of the Rakshasas are wonderful. Which man or Vanara can accomplish such a wonderful feat?" Many are thus trying to persuade Ravana, but as the miser is ever unwilling to part with his money, so he is most reluctant to give you up. He will never surrender you unless he is killed in battle. He is thus resolved, and in truth such a decision is meant for his death. Unless he is destroyed with all his family, he will not give you up simply out of fear. Rama will surely return with you to Ayodhya after encompassing his destruction."

While Sarama and Janaki were talking thus, deep trumpet notes were heard. The followers of Ravana got dispirited at the heroic roars of the Vanara troops.

CHAPTER XXII

MALYAVAN'S SPEECH

In the meantime, Rama advanced towards Lanka by resounding the quarters by loud trumpets and conchs. Hearing those trumpet notes the cruel Ravana, the oppressor of the world, thought for a moment. Then addressing his counsellors he said, "I have heard all that you

have said about Rama. But I know you to be great heroes and I can't understand why you have thus lapsed into silence by thinking of Rama's prowess."

Then his maternal uncle, the wise Malyavan said, "O king! the king who is versed in fourteen kinds of knowledge and who acts in conformity to law and customs attains prosperity and he is feared by his enemies. He alone thrives who concludes peace and declares war at opportune moments and who is ever anxious to increase his resources. If the king be weaker than his enemy or even equal to him, then peace should be concluded but he should fight when he is stronger than his foes. It is in no way advisable to slight one's enemy, O king! Go and conclude peace with Rama and return Janaki for whom he has declared war. The Gandharvas and holy saints pray for his victory, so you should make peace with Rama. You see Brahma has created two things for the gods and the Asuras, that is virtue and vice. Virtue is on the side of the noble gods, and vice on the side of the Asuras. When the age of truth arrives, then virtue triumphs over vice, but in the age of sin, vice triumphs over virtue. O king! in the course of your career throughout the worlds you have trampled upon virtue; that is why the enemy is more powerful than you. Now, vice like a dreadful python is going to devour the Rakshasas, while virtue is strengthening their side. You are too addicted to worldly things and unruly, and once you tyrannised over the holy saints greatly. They are virtuous and

are devoted to religious penance; their prowess is unbearable like blazing fire. The Rakshasas fled away like clouds scattered by the summer-wind when they chant the Vedic Mantras and offer oblations duly to the sacrificial fire. The smoke rising from the sacrifices performed by the fire-like Rishis, when worshipping the god of fire, robs the Rakshasas of their strength and envelopes them in darkness. The severe acts of religious penance that are performed by them in the famous places of pilgrimage, are now scalding the Rakshasas. No doubt, on account of the blessing of Brahma, you are invincible and indestructible by the gods, Asuras and the Yakshas, but men, Vanaras and the Golangulas are of a different race. It is they who have been roaring gazing towards Lanka. Just look, evil portents are everywhere to be found. The clouds pour forth blood wirh deafening thunders, and the sky is covered with dust. Horses, cattle and other beasts of burden are shedding tears; jackals and other ravenous animals are entering the gardens of Lanka with fierce howls. The Mahakalas[1] appear in dreams and grin with their yellow teeth. Dogs steal away offerings of worship. Asses are born of cows, mice of mongooses! Tigers are pairing with cats, dogs with swine, and the Kinnaras and the Rakshasas with human beings. Yellow pigeons with red feet are fluttering about everywhere at the bidding of death. Tame domestic parrots being attacked by wild pugnacious birds drop dead

1 Evil spirits, perhaps messengers (prognostications) of Death.

from their cages. Birds and animals are crying gazing at the sun. Every evening a black burning hideous figure with shaven head is seen in every house! O king! such evil portents are thus to be found everywhere. The heroic Rama is no ordinary human being. He must be a wonderful being who has succeeded in building a bridge over the sea. Perhaps he is Vishnu incarnate in human form. Go and conclude peace with him and decide upon a course of action after examining his achievements carefully."

Thus concluded Malyavan of excellent valour and lapsed into silence after seeing something in Ravana's mind.

Chapter XXIII
RAVANA'S ANGER

Ravana, whose doom was at hand, could not bear these well-meaning words of Malyavan. He frowned at him and rolling his eyes in anger said, "I have never heard such hard expressions which you have just now uttered for my supposed welfare, thinking my enemy as a formidable one. Why do you consider him to be so formidable—one who is an ordinary being, who has been disinherited by his father, and exiled into the forest, and whose retinue consists of the wild Vanaras! And why do you consider him, who is the lord of all the Rakshasas, so weak? Perhaps, you are envious of me as I am a great hero, or it might be that you thus want to incite me to a fight? There,

must be some deep reason for your speaking in this way. Unless for the purpose of inciting me to fight, no prudent man will speak like this to his master. Janaki is like the goddess of beauty, shorn of her lotus. I have secured her from the forest, why should I return her simply from fear of Rama. Rama will be destroyed within a few days along with Lakshmana and Sugriva. What has he to fear whom even the gods cannot stand in battle ? I shall rather go into two pieces, but shall never bend. This is my nature, and it is not possible to overcome that nature. Of course, Rama has succeeded in building a bridge over the sea, but that is a pure accident and there is nothing to wonder at. Rama has reached Lanka with his hosts, but I shall never desist so long as there is life in me."

At this, Malyavan, greatly ashamed, left the place with his permission.

After this Ravana after consulting with his counsellors made arrangements for the defence of the city. He posted the heroic Prahasta at the eastern gate, Mahaparshwa and Mahodara at the southern gate, the wizard Indrajit at the western gate, and then after directing Suka and Sarana for protecting the northern gate, he at last decided to defend it himself. He then asked the powerful Virupaksha to defend the centre of the city with a large number of troops.

Thus making arrangements for the defence of the city, Ravana whose end was drawing nigh, felt much gratified.

Then when ministers had gone back to their places after wishing him victory and after dismissing every one, he entered his rich spacious palace.

CHAPTER XXIV

RAVANA'S ARMY

In the meantime, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Vibhishana, Angada, Lakshmana, Sarabha, Savandu, Sushena, Mainda, Dvivida, Gaya, Gavaksha, Kumuda, Nala, Panasa and others came near the enemy's line. They said amongst themselves, "There stands the city of Lanka. Even the Asuras, Uragas and the Gandharvas cannot assail it. Ravana himself resides in the city. Let us now decide upon our course of action."

Thereupon Vibhishana spoke in chaste language, "O heroes! a little before this I sent Anala, Panasa, Sampati and Pramiti to Lanka. They reconnoitred the movements of the enemy's army in the disguise of birds and have come back after seeing the arrangements made for the defence of the city. Rama! I shall now report to you what I have heard of them. Prahasta with a large army is defending the eastern gate of the city. Mahaparshwa and Mahodara the southern gate, and Indrajit the western gate, and a band of warriors with various weapons are with him. Ravana himself is anxiously defending the northern gate, and a large Rakshasa army is with him. Virupaksha

with a body of lancers is defending the centre. The enemy's army consists of ten thousand cavalry, hundred thousand elephants, and ten million infantry.[1] They are exceedingly powerful and formidable, and Ravana is proud of them. In times of war, each of the Rakshasa leaders becomes surrounded by millions of Rakshasas."

Thus saying, Vibhishana pointed out the four ministers.

Vibhishana resumed for the edification of Rama, "O Rama ! when Ravana went to fight against Kuvera, six million Rakshasas went with him. In valour and prowess they are mighty ! Don't be frightened by this report. I want you to rise equal to the occasion. You can even subdue the god by your own valour. Draw up your army in battle-array and slay Ravana in battle."

Thereupon Rama being resolved for the destruction of the enemy directed, "Let the heroic Nala with a large number of troops challenge Prahasta at the eastern gate. Let Vali's son, Angada, atrack Mahaparshwa and Mahodara at the southern gate, let Hanuman force his passage through the western gate. I shall myself with Lakshmana besiege the northern gate, since Ravana is there, and I am resolved to remove that tyrant from this world. Let Sugriva, Jamvuvan and Vibhishana attack the

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1 In the original the above numbers indicate the number of the Generals, i. e., ten thousand cavalry Generals.

centre. Let this also be understood that no Vanara should assume the form of a human being; we two brothers, friend Vibhishana and these four counsellors will remain in human forms."

The intelligent Rama having made such arrangements for success, came out to ascend the top of the beautiful Suvela hill, and the vast Vanara army advanced towards Lanka.

Thereafter Rama addressing Sugriva and the wise Vibhishana said, "Let us now ascend the Suvela hill. We shall pass the night here. Let us reconnoitre from this place the city of Ravana, who for his death has carried off my wife and who never cares for religion or morality."

Thus saying, Rama ascended the Suvela hill; the heroic Lakshmana, Sugriva and Vibhishana with his counsellors followed him, with bows in their hands. On getting on the Suvela hill, Rama found the city of Lanka, as if built on the air. It was encircled by an excellent wall with huge gates and formidable black-skinned Rakshasas were defending the wall.

In the meantime, the sun went down reddening the western sky with crimson rays and slowly the moon rose in the east. Vibhishana then greeted Rama with affection. Rama with Lakshmana being surrounded by the leaders took rest on the summit of the Suvela hill during the night.

Chapter XXV

SUGRIVA'S DARING

Next day, the army leaders went to see the gardens, parks and forests of Lanka. They were all spacious, beautiful and full of peaceful calm. The Vanaras were greatly surprised at that range of trees with soft coppery bunches of flowers that stood at various places entwined with beautiful creepers. The green woods with sweet-scented flowers and fruits appeared most agreeable to the sight. It was beautiful like the heavenly garden of Nandana and the Chitravratha forest of the Gandharvas. Five springs gushed at various points and all the splendour of the seasons seemed to be present there. Throatful music of many sweet-singing birds, like the cuckoos, was being heard, and the peacocks were dancing in the shade. The Vanaras in delight entered the woods, and a sweet breeze began to fan them with gentle breath.

After that, a number of generals entered Lanka at the instruction of Sugriva. The firm earth shook with their heroic tread, and beasts and birds hid themselves in fear. There stood the Trikuta hill kissing the sky. It was covered with golden blossoms stretching hundreds of yojanas in length. Even birds could not reach its summit. Upon that high hill stood the beautiful city of Lanka, twenty yojanas in length and ten yojanas in breadth. Its great wall made of gold and silver and its high city-gates were quite impressive in their beauty. It

was a city of palaces and lofty towers. There the palace of Ravana, high as the Kailasa peak, stood on a thousand pillars, blazing with gold and gems. It was the ornament of Lanka and thousands of Rakshasas guarded it day and night. Rama was greatly astonished at the sight of that prosperous Lanka rich and beautiful like a heavenly city.

Rama then, ascended the Suvela hill and cast his looks around and saw on the summit of the Trikuta mountain the magnificent city of Lanka, built by Viswakarma and found Ravana himself standing at the city-gate.

On both sides of him were the insignia of royalty. He was being fanned with white chowris, a white umbrella was held over his head, he had red ornaments on his person and his breast bore the mark of a scar produced by the tusk of Airavata. He was dark like a blue cloud. His apparel was worked with gold, and his scarf was red like the blood of a hare. He looked like a cloud tinged by the evening rays of the sun.

In the meantime, Sugriva at the sight of Ravana, stood up in great anger. His strength and courage doubled at this. He descended from the peak and in a bound arrived at the northern gate of Lanka and after looking hard at Ravana, spoke forth fearlessly, "O Rakshasa! I am a friend and humble servant of Rama, the lord of all. I am protected by his valour; you have no escape from my hand."

With these words Sugriva sprang upon

Ravana, threw down the magnificent crown from his head, and rushed against him.

Thereupon Ravana said, "In my absence you were the possessor of a beautiful neck,[1] but your neck will immediately be severed in my presence."

Saying this, Ravana stood up in anger, seized Sugriva forcibly and threw him down on the ground. Sugriva instantly bounded up like a ball used in *Kanduka*[2] play, and threw down Ravana on the ground. Both of them began to perspire, both of them bled all over their bodies, both of them choked each other by their tight embrace, both stood like the Salmali and the Kinsuka tree. One beat the other sometimes with fists, sometimes with slaps, and they repeatedly fell and rose up again. At last, both of them rolled on the ground. They stood up again, they rolled into a ditch. They began to breathe heavily from exhaustion. They rested for a moment and resumed the fight. At times they seized each other by their arms, sometimes they paced up and down from violent wrath. They fought each other like two elephants or like two lions. They began to drag each other by their arms and again they fell on the ground, and after rising from the ground they began to abuse each other and walked up and down in restlessness. Neither of the two felt exhausted nor

1 Sugriva—means possessor of a Sugriva—i.e., a well-formed neck.

2 Kanduka—an ancient form of sport (which even the girls played) where a ball was thrown up and caught like a cricket ball. Nothing but ordinary wrestling.

tired. The two warriors, like two infuriated elephants, attacked each other and warded off each other's attack with their arms, like trunks, one tried to finish the other, and one waited for the other as two angry cats sit facing each other over an article of food, one ready to spring upon the other. They began to pace to and fro in various ways peculiar to wrestling.[1]

Then Ravana tried to employ magic.[2] The victorious Sugriva understanding his motive sprang up in the sky. Ravana stood there being unable to follow Sugriva. Thus victory was gained by Sugriva. Sugriva, thus exhausting Ravana, returned to Rama with the speed of wind. Rama's eagerness for fight increased. At that time, Sugriva was greeted by beasts, birds and by the trees.

CHAPTER XXVI

RAMA'S ADMONITION

Then, Rama witnessing the signs of fighting all over the person of Sugriva, embraced him closely and said, "My friend! you made this daring dash without consulting me, but such

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1 Mandal, Vividhasthan, Gomutraka, Gati, Turyaka Gati, Vakragati, Warding off, Attacking, Abbidravan, Aplavan, Savigraha, Abasthana, Pravritta, Apadruta, Avapluta, Upauynasba. Various strategic movements, incidental to wrestling have been mentioned in the original.

2 Maya is not magic, properly speaking. But something like hypnotism that produces illusion. It is also known as the Rakshasi Vidya.

daredevil acts are not worthy of a king. O hero, you put myself, Vibhishana and the whole army in great anxiety. Please never do it again. You see, if any accident befall you, what will be the fate of my Janaki? What shall I do with Bharata, Satrughna, Lakshmana and even with my own self? O hero! though I am fully aware of your valour, yet I decided about my death in your absence. Now, after destroying Ravana with his family, I shall install Bharata on the throne of Ayodhya and Vibhishana on the throne of Lanka, and then give up my body."

Thereupon Sugriva replied, "My friend, as I am fully conscious of my own prowess, how could I then check myself at the sight of Ravana, the abductor of your wife?"

Then, Rama after greeting Sugriva, said to Lakshmana, "My dear, let us take shelter under the green woods abounding in fruits and flowers and wait there after drawing the army in battle-array. Now, I find on all sides dreadful omens foreboding destruction of the lives of good many Vanaras, Bhallukas and Rakshasas. Look! how violently the wind is blowing, there are repeated shocks of earthquake and the hills are shaking and the clouds are raining blood. The evening is awe-inspiring and horribly red, as if fire is being emitted from the sun, and inauspicious beasts and birds are howling, looking at the sun. The moon at night appears to be extremely wan and surrounded by a black-red circle, as is seen on the eve of universal destruction. The sun is

marked with a blue stain and is girt by a long, narrow red circle. There has been a deviation in the motion of the planets and stars. Crows and vultures fall upon the ground. All these presage a dark calamity. Hear the jackals cry. The field of the battle will be strewn with the carcasses of the Vanaras and the Rakshasas and will be muddy with blood. Let us soon enter Lanka with our Vanara hosts."

Saying this, the heroic Rama soon descended from the hill. He ordered the well-equipped Vanara army to set forth in an auspicious hour. And he followed them with a bow in his hand. Sugriva, Vibhishana, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Nila and Lakshmana followed in his steps. They soon arrived at the gate of Lanka. Lanka was girt with a high wall. It was decorated with flags and furnished with high city-gates. The city was inaccessible even to the gods.

The Vanaras, at the command of Rama, led the attack against the city. Ravana was standing at the northern gate like Neptune in the midst of the sea! Rama and Lakshmana attacked the eastern gate. As the demons guard the nether regions, so formidable Rakshasas guarded the city. It was a terror to the weak.

General Nila with Mainda and Dvivida appeared before the eastern gate. The heroic Angada with Rishabha, Gaya, Gavaya and Gavaksha appeared at the southern gate; the heroic Hanuman reached the western gate; and Sugriva, Prajangha, Tarasha and other heroes attacked the centre. Thirty-six million of Vanaras

arrived where Sugriva, the king of the Kapis stood. The noble Vibhishana and Lakshmana placed hundred thousand Vanaras at each gate at the command of Rama. Sushena and Jamvuvan protected the rear of Rama by placing themselves behind a screen of trees. The Vanaras endowed with sharp teeth like those of tigers, got themselves ready for the fight with trees and stones. Their visages were grim and their tails were distended with rage. Many of them were stronger than hundreds of elephants put together. Their movements were wonderful. They appeared like locusts at the time of some great catastrophe of nature. Still the Vanaras were pouring in. The sky and the earth seemed to be covered by them. Thus the Vanaras surrounded the city of Lanka.

The Rakshasas were greatly astonished at the sight of those cloud-like Vanaras. The noise of the Vanara army filled the sky, like the thundering sound with which a dam gives way before the rush of the sea. The city of Lanka shook with its hills and forests. The Vanaras were under the protection of Rama and Lakshmana and were invincible even to the gods.

Thereafter Rama held consultations with his counsellors. He was not ignorant of the time-honoured canons of polity, as friendship, and sowing dissensions amongst the enemy. He thought that his object could not be attained except by chastisement. Then Rȧma understanding the intentions of Vibhishana, address-

ing Angada said, "O noble one! go to Ravana and communicate my words to the Rakshasa king. Tell him that we have safely crossed the sea and have besieged Lanka without any resistance; your doom is at hand. Out of haughtiness you have so long oppressed the gods, Yakshas, Rishis, Apsaras, Nagas, Gandharvas, and the Rakshasas. The pride of your getting a boon from Brahma must be destroyed. Being smitten with the sorrow for losing my wife, I have encroached upon your door like Death. If you fight against me, you will attain the coveted end of the gods, Maharshis, and the royal saints. Now, show your magic by which you abducted Janaki. If you do not seek my protection by returning Janaki to me, I shall destroy all the Rakshasas with my sharp arrows. The pious Vibhishana is my protege; he will reign over Lanka without any thorns. You are vicious, only the fools are on your side, and you won't be able to enjoy wealth. If you fly over the three worlds in the form of a bird, you will not escape from my hands. I am speaking what is good for you. Perform the rites which are meant for salvation in the next world. Your life is within my palm. Just look at Lanka to your heart's content, for soon you will cease to look upon it."

At these words, the formidable Angada started along the sky like a burning flame. He soon appeared before Ravana and found him engaged with his counsellors. Angada got down from the sky and stood before him like a pillar of fire, and after introducing himself, he reported

all that Rama had said in the presence of all. "O Rakshasa king!" said he, "I am an envoy of Rama, the king of Ayodhya, and am the son of Vali, the Kapi chief. My name is Angada. Perhaps I am not unknown to you. The heroic Rama has asked you to come out and fight with him and to prove yourself a man, and he will free the three worlds from all oppressions by destroying you with your friends and children. Your are a source of trouble to the Rishis, and an enemy of the gods, Yakshas, Rakshasas and Gandharvas. Rama will send you to perdition. If you do not return Janaki after bowing to his feet, Vibhishana will be the lord of wealthy Lanka."

When Angada said these hard words, Ravana repeatedly asked his counsellors to capture Angada and put him to death.

Thereupon, four formidable Rakshasas immediately seized Angada. The heroic Aagada, in order to display his prowess before the Rakshasas, did not offer any resistance to his arrest and he at once jumped upon the roof with those four Rakshasas, like four flies sticking to him. They being unable to bear the momentum of that spring, fell near Ravana, Angada then attacked the lofty tower and broke that in pieces, as formerly the thunder-bolt of Indra crushed the peak of the Himalayas. Angada then repeatedly sprang with heroic yells, giving out his name in pride. Thus by afflicting the Rakshasas and by gratifying the Vanaras, Angada came back to Rama.

Ravana was greatly enraged at the sight of his broken tower and heaved a deep sigh thinking that his doom was nigh.

In the meantime, Rama desirous of victory, got ready for the battle. Sushena, at the command of Sugriva, with the clever Vanaras—capable of assuming different forms at will—like the moon surrounded by the stars, began to patrol at different gates to pick up all sorts of information from there. The Vanara army extended up to the beach of the sea. The Rakshasas were greatly surprised and panic-stricken at the sight of the innumerable Vanara hosts. They even found the Vanaras over the city-wall. A loud noise filled the air and the Rakshasas equipped with arms began to patrol hither and thither.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE GREAT SALLY

The Rakshasas getting into Ravana's chamber said, "O king! Rama has beseiged Lanka with ease." Ravana was greatly enraged at this news and hearing that arrangements for guarding the city had been doubled, got upon his palace. Ravana grew extremely anxious at the sight of the vast Vanara army. For a long time he brooded over the matter and fixed his glance upon Rama and the Vanara hosts.

In the meantime, Rama gradually advanced

towards Lanka with his army. He found Lanka well-protected and casting his look upon the gay-looking city, he said within himself, "Alas! my gazelle-eyed Janaki is confined within its walls. She is lean with fasts and has made the ground her bed." He was greatly pained with this thought and ordered an immediate attack.

As soon as the signal for fight was given, the Vanaras filled all quarters with their heroic yells. Every one thought that he would be the first person to begin fighting. Thinking this, the Vanaras stood up rooting huge rocks and trees. At that time, Ravana getting upon the roof of his palace watched the manouvres of the Vanara army. Vanaras paid little heed to him and began to enter Lanka in great numbers, batch after batch. Those Vanaras of golden hue, with red faces, were resolved to do service to Rama. They proceeded with stones and trees in their hands and began to batter the city-wall with them and even by their fist-blows. The clear water of the ditches became soiled with weeds, reeds, dust and logs of wood. They were formidable like infuriated elephants. They rent the sky with their shouts, "Victory to Rama, Victory to Lakshmana, Victory to Sugriva."

Viravahu, Survahu, Anala and Panasa made a breach in the outer wall and waited at the spot. They pitched their camps in front of it. Kumuda laid siege to the eastern gate with ten thousand Vanaras. Panasa and Prasabha stood ready for their help. Swatavali attacked the southern gate with twenty Kotis of Vanaras and

Tarapati and Sushena with millions of Vanaras invaded the western gate, and Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva the northern gate. Golangula and Gavaksha with millions of ttoops stood by Rama, and his other flank was protected by Dhumra with millions of fierce Bhallukas. Vibhishana holding a mace in his hand, with his four counsellors, came near Rama. Gaya, Gavaksha, Gavaya, and Gandhamadana began to move hither and thither for the protection of the Vanara army.

Ravana was enraged at this and ordered his troops to get ready for the battle. As soon as they received that order a very great noise ensued. Thousands of conch-shells blew out being filled with wind from the Rakshasas' mouths and everywhere yellow Bheris[1] like the moon, were being struck by golden sticks. The Rakshasas were bluish dark like the Suka-birds[2] but with the white conch-shells attached to their mouths, they looked like banks of clouds with the cranes flying under them! Then they rushed out in great enthusiasm like the surging waters of the sea.

The Vanaras replied to that sound by their heroic yell. The earth and sky shook with trumpet notes and heroic roar, and the field of battle resounded with the rumbling sound of the moving chariots, neighing of the

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1 Bheri ordinarily means a trumpet, but trumpet is not struck but blown.

2 A kind of parrots, generally of green colour.

horses and trumpetings of the elephants. In the meantime, a fierce fight commenced between the two sides. The Rakshasas, displaying their great prowess began to strike the Vanaras with their flaming gadas, sharp sulas, Saktis and Parasus. The huge-bodied Vanaras in their turn began to strike them with their nails, teeth, stones and logs of wood. "Victory to Sugriva" rose the constant shout from the Vanaras, and "Victory to Ravana" repeatedly shouted the Rakshasas. Each side displayed its valour. The Rakshasas were over the wall and Vanaras stood on the ground. The Rakshasas began to strike the Vanaras with Bhindipalas[1] and Sulas. The Vanaras in fury sprang up and began to drag them down. Severe struggle ensued between the parties, and the field of battle became drenched with blood.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GREAT FIGHT

Both sides became enraged at the sight of each other. The Rakshasas rushed forth in their horses decorated with gold, their elephants incapable of being looked at like tongues of fire and in chariots glittering like the sun. They were clad in beautiful armours and their deeds were quite thrilling. Each one of them prayed for

1 It is difficult, and in the most cases impossible, to identify these ancient weapons of war. So I have retained their original names.

Ravana's victory. The Vanaras rushed forward to meet them and a fierce fight ensued. As Andhakasura, in ancient times, fought against God Vyomakesa, so Indrajit fought against Angada ; the formidable Sampati battled against Prajangha ; Hanuman against Jamvumali ; the highly enraged Vibhishana against Satrughna ; the heroic Gaja against Tapana ; the brave Nila against Nikumbha ; Sugriva against Praghasa ; Lakshmana against Virupaksha ; Agniketu, Rasmiketu, Mitraghna and Yajnakopa began to fight against Rama ; Vajramusti against Maituda ; Asaniprabha against Dvivida ; the formidable Prapan against Nala ; and the strong Sushena against Vidyunmali. Blood flowed from the bodies of both the Rakshasa and Vanara warriors —blood flowed like a stream, their hairs for its weeds and the bodies for the floating logs of wood. Indrajit in great wrath hurled a mace against Angada, as Indra hurls his thunderbolt. Angada at once took up that mace and hurling it back against him, crushed his golden chariot with its horses and the charioteer. Prajangha pierced Sampati with three arrows. Aswakarna killed Prajangha. Jamvumali from his chariot hurled a Sakti against Hanuman's heart. Hanuman in anger jumped on his chariot and with one slap he destroyed him with his chariot. Prapan rushed towards Nala in great fury and pierced him with shafts with his swift hands. Nala at once plucked out his eyes and rendered him useless. At that time, Sugriva killed Praghasa who was about to swallow the Vanaras. Lakshmana after smothering the grim-visaged

Virupaksha with his arrows, laid him low with a single shaft. Agniketu, Rasmiketu, Satrughna and Yajnakopa were molesting Rama, but Rama with his flaming arrows cut off their heads. Vajramusti was crushed by Mainda's beating. As the sun penetrates the clouds with his keen rays, so Nikumbha pierced Nila—dark as collyrium dye. Discharging a volley of arrows by his quick hands, he began to laugh in derision. Nila cut off his head along with that of his charioteer, with the wheel of a chariot. Dvivida hurled a stone against Asaniprabha and the latter, too, began to smite the former with his thunderbolt-like arrows. Dvivida being greatly enraged by it smote him, with his chariot, into atoms by a Sala tree. Vidyunmali set up heroic roars after piercing Sushena with his gold-plated arrows. Sushena crushed his chariot into pieces by hurling a huge stone against it. As soon as the chariot was gone, Vidyunmali sprang on the ground with a mace in his hand. Sushena was greatly enraged at this and rushed towards him with a huge block of stone. In the meantime, Vidyunmali struck Sushena with a mace on the breast. Sushena, nothing ruffled by that blow, silently hurled that stone against him. Vidyunmali at once dropped dead on the field of battle. Thus the Rakshasas were beaten by the Vanaras, as the Daityas were by the Devas in ancient times, and were thus worsted at each step. The battle-field was soon covered with bhallas, gadas, Saktis, tumaras, arrows, broken chariots and with the carcasses of the Rakshasas and Vanara soldiers. Dogs and jackals were running

about and tearing the limbs of the dead warriors.

The Rakshasas fainted[1] at the smell of blood and then renewed their fight in greater fury and waited for the advent of night.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE NIGHT ATTACK

At last, the sun went down and the fatal night came. Fierce fight ensued between the Vanaras and their born enemies, the Rakshasas. Intense darkness[2] enveloped everything and one killed the other saying, "You are a Vanara," or "You are a Rakshasa." Tremendous shouts like, "Kill him," "Tear him," "Pierce him," "Come on," "Why do you run away ?" filled the nocturnal air. The night was pitch-dark, and the Rakshasas were black-skinned, but they, having worn golden armours, shone like phosphorescent herbs. The Rakshasas being overwhelmed with rage rushed towards the Vanaras and devoured them in their progress. The Vanaras too in anger sprang upon their golden chariots, yoked with horses decorated with gold, tore off their banners and their snake-like flag-

1 Possibly it means that the sight of so much blood flowing in streams upset the Rakshasas at first, but the Rakshasas were blood-thirsty, it is said !

2 Thus it has been described in the Iliad that supernatural darkness once enveloped the field of Troy when neither friends nor foes could be distinguished ; then Ajax prayed for light.

staffs with their sharp teeth. They began to bite the elephants with their riders and thus harassed the Rakshasas thoroughly. Rama and Lakshmana too, with their snake-like shafts, destroyed a good number of the Rakshasas, both visible and invisible. Dust raised by the hoofs of the horses and chariot-wheels blinded the eyes of the warriors and filled the air; sounds of bheri, mridanga, panava and of the conch-shells, with the clatter of arms, rattling of the chariots, neighing of the horses created a tremendous din. Here and there lay scattered the corpses of the Vanaras and Rakshasas. The battle-field was literally covered over with dead bodies and various kinds of arms. Every part of the field was drenched with blood and became impassable. In fact, that night of slaughter was like the night of final dissolution.

The Rakshasas advanced towards Rama, discharging a volley of arrows and they set up repeated shouts of war. Their cries sounded like the deep rumbling of the clouds that rise at the time of the universal Destruction. Rama with a swift hand discharged six flaming arrows against Yajnashatru, Mahaparshwa, Mahodara, Vajradanstra, Suka and Sarana. They being penetrated through their armours, at once took to their heels. Rama lighted every quarter by his shafts. The Rakshasas that were before him were destroyed like moths in fire. His gold-plated arrows were discharged in all directions and the dark night with their glitter appeared like an autumnal night lighted with glow-worms! The night grew fearful with trumpet

sounds and the yells of the Rakshasas. That tremendous uproar was echoed and re-echoed from the caves of the Trikuta hill. Dark, stalwart Golangulas began to devour the Rakshasas.

Here, Indrajit was fighting against Angada. The chariot and horses and the charioteer of Indajit were destroyed by Angada. With great difficulty Indrajit got down from the car and made good his escape. The gods and the saints then greatly praised Angada for his heroic deeds. Rama and Lakshmana too were immensely pleased. Everyone was aware of Indrajit's prowess in battle, and so everybody was glad at his defeat. Sugriva, Vibhishana and the other Vanaras repeatedly praised Angada for this deed.

Indrajit was greatly enraged at this defeat from Angada. He was proud on account of the boon he had received from Brahma and also for his magical powers of being invisible to others. He then began to smite Rama and Lakshmana with his sharp arrows and struck them with Naga weapons. He was a subtle warrior and he overpowered the two brothers in no time. It was almost impossible to vanquish them in an open fight, so he had recourse to magic to overwhelm the two brothers in the presence of other warriors.

Rama then asked Sushena, Nila, Angada, Sharabha, Dvivida, Hanuman, Saunprastha, Dishabha, Skanda and Kummeda to find out Indrajit. These leaders were greatly delighted at this command of Rama, and uprooting huge trees they began to search for Indrajit in the

sky. Indrajit began to stop those Vanaras in their courses by his heavenly arms. Those leaders of the army became deeply wounded by his Naracha weapons. Indrajit was hidden in darkness like the sun behind a bank of clouds. None could find him out.

Indrajit, in anger, began to smother Rama and Lakshmana incessantly with Naga weapons. The two heroes received injuries all over their bodies and they began to bleed from their wounds. They looked like two Kinsuka trees in blossoms. In the meantime, Indrajit, dark as collyrium dye and with eyes having red ends, rendering himself invisible said to Rama and Lakshmana, "You see, when at the time of fighting I render myself invisible, then even Indra cannot find me out, not to speak of getting at me. I have already smitten you with my arrows. I shall now send you to the abode of Death."

With these words he pierced Rama and Lakshmana, with his arrows and began to roar in great delight. Rama and Lakshmana were bound by Naga-pasa and they could not see anything. They were wounded all over their bodies and fell down like two flag-staffs of Indra. They were profusely bleeding from their wounds and there was hardly an inch of their bodies unhurt; being struck on the heart Rama, first fell on the ground. The arrows of Indrajit were bright and transparent and covered the sky like dust. Rama being struck with naracha, ardha naracha, bhalla, anjalika, vatsadanta, sinha-danshtra

and khura fell on the ground, the bed of the heroes, having thrown off his bow, which was deprived of the bow-string. He could not even clutch his bow. At that sight, Lakshmana despaired of life. Lakshmana was overwhelmed with grief, on seeing the lotus-eyed Rama thus lying on the ground. The Vanaras were greatly smitten with sorrow and began to shed tears by surrounding Rama on all sides.

CHAPTER XXX

VICTORY OF INDRAJIT

The Vanaras were greatly frightened at this. Rama and Lakshmana were tied up in Naga-pasa and Sugriva and Vibhishana arrived at the spot. After them came Nila, Dvivida, Mainda, Kumuda, Sushena, Angada, and Hanuman. Rama and Lakshmana were stricken with arrows; they were lying inert, bathed in blood, and their breath was gently blowing. The two great heroes lay prostrate like two golden stuffs, and the captains shed tears surrounding their bodies. Vibhishana and Sugriva were greatly smitten with sorrow, the Vanaras repeatedly cast their glances towards the sky, but Indrajit remained hidden by his magic, so the Vanaras could not find him out. Vibhishana was, however, conversant with magic and he could see Indrajit before him. The heroism of Indrajit was unparalleled in battle and none was a match for him.

Then the spirited Indrajit, seeing Rama and Lakshmana lying on the ground, encouraging the

Rakshasas with glee, said, "You see, those who have destroyed Khara and Dushana have been slain by me. They will never be able to sunder the tie of the 'Naga-pasa'. Even if all the gods and the Asuras unite together, they would not be able to liberate them from this bondage. On whose account, my father passed sad and anxious nights without even taking to his bed, and out of whose fear the people of Lanka were restless like a stream in the rainy season; I have removed that cause of all anxiety and fear. Their prowess and valour have been rendered futile like the autumnal clouds."

With these words, Indrajit began to discharge his arrows at the other Vanara leaders. He shot nine shafts against Nala and three against Mainda and three against Dvivida. He struck Jamvuvan with one arrow on the breast and Hanuman with ten arrows. After striking Gavaksha and Sarabha with two arrows each, he began to hurl his shafts in great vehemence against the lord of the Golangulas and Angada. The hero after smothering the Vanara heroes by his fiery arrows, set up such heroic roars as struck terror into the hearts of the Vanaras. He then addressing the Rakshasas with a triumphant laugh said, "O heroes! just look at Rama and Lakshmana, they are now lying senseless and inert."

The Rakshasas then roared in pride of Indrajit's heroic deeds. Seeing Rama and Lakshmana lying listless on the ground, the Rakshasas took them to be dead, and repeatedly eulo-

gised Indrajit for his valour. Indrajit thus rendering the Rakshasas happy and cheerful entered the city again.

Sugriva was greatly alarmed at the sight of numerous injuries on Rama and Lakshmana. His eyes grew red with anger, and wet with tears in sorrow. Thereupon Vibhishana said, "Sugriva! don't be frightened. Wipe those tears. This is how fighting takes place. Victory is never attained at ease nor on every occasion. Now, if our luck be auspicious, these two heroes will soon recover their consciousness. Be assured and consoled."

With those words, Vibhishana wiped off tears from Sugriva's eyes with his palm wet with water. Then he took up water in the cavity of his palm, made it potent with mantras, washed Sugriva's two eyes with that. and said, "O king of the Kapis! restrain your sorrows. In time of such danger like this, even too much affection and love become the cause of one's ruin. Remove your sorrows that stand in the way of action. The Vanara troops have been greatly alarmed at this sight. It is your duty to think of their welfare, and to protect them so long Rama remains senseless. We shall be free from anxiety when Rama and Lakshmana regain their consciousness. Such a thing is nothing to Rama, and from Lakshmana's sight it is clear that he will not succumb. The beauty that is rare in a dead person has not abandoned him. Sugriva, be patient and encourage your troops. I, too, shall console the soldiers. Look what the Vanaras

with their eyes dilated with the fear are whispering to each other's ears. Let them cast off their fear like an used-up garland."

Thus saying, Vibhishana began to rally the Vanara troops dispersed in various directions.

In the meantime, the sorcerer Indrajit entered Lanka with his army and appearing before his father, Ravana, said with joined palms, "Father! Rama and Lakshmana have been destroyed."

Hearing this happy news, Ravana stood up and embraced Indrajit in joy. After smelling his head, Ravana asked Indrajit to speak everything in detail. Indrajit then described to Ravana how he had rendered Rama and Lakshmana powerless under the bondage of the Nagapasa. Ravana was extremely delighted at this. His fear of Rama was thus removed and he greeted Indrajit again and again.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE GRIEF OF SITA

The Vanaras guarded Rama by surrounding his body. Hanuman, Angada, Nila, Kumudu, Panasa, Sushena, Nala, Gaya, Gavaksha, Samprastha, Risabha, Satavali and Prithu guarded Rama with great care. A large number of troops stood there with uprooted trees. They were casting their looks towards the sky hither and thither and at each rustling of a single blade of grass they thought that a Rakshasa was coming.

Here, Ravana after dismissing Indrajit in a cheerful mind summoned the Rakshasis that kept watch over Sita. Trijata and other Rakshasis soon came at his bidding. Ravana then told them in joy, "Rakshasis! go and tell Janaki that Indrajit has destroyed Rama and Lakshmana. Take her in the Pushpaka chariot to have a sight of the two. For whose protection Janaki has haughtily spurned me so long that Rama along with Lakshmana has been killed in the fight. No, she has nothing to hope for, or fear from Rama, so she may freely and without any anxious hesitation may accept me. She cannot but be mine."

Thereafter the Rakshasis appeared at the Asoka woods and with the Pushpaka chariot went near Sita. Sita at that time was overwhelmed with the sorrow for her husband. The Rakshasis took her up in the chariot and proceeded with her along the different roads of Lanka. By that time news of Rama and Lakshmana's death spread from one city-gate to another.

After this, Janaki with Trijata arrived at the battle-field. She found the Vanara troops routed and the Rakshasas merry. She found the Vanara heroes cast down with sorrow sitting round the bodies of Rama and Lakshmana who were lying unconscious on the ground. Their bodies bristled with arrows, their armours were pierced and cut and their bows and arrows lay at some distance from them. Janaki was upset at the sight of these two

lotus-eyed heroes lying on the field of battle —the bed of heroes— she began to lament bitterly, 'Alas! the astrologers used to tell me that I would be a mother, and that I would never be a widow. Alack! their predictions have now proved false. They told me that I would be the queen of a king who would be a great performer of sacrifices, but that saying has proved false on account of Rama's death. The words of those wise men have come to naught, for they predicted that I would be the chief amongst the wives of the heroic kings. The auspicious marks that, in the opinion of women, bring royal fortune—installation on the throne along with her husband, there are still on my palms and feet! In fact, the inauspicious marks, that an unfortunate woman bears which predicts her widowhood are not at all present on me. But in spite of all auspicious signs, everything has come to naught. The Samudrik[1] Shastra tells us that the sign of lotus on the palms and feet of a woman shall never be in vain, but Rama being dead all these Shastras have turned out to be false. My hair is dark blue, fine and even, my eye-brows are joined with each other, my thighs are hairless and round; my teeth are close set and firm, my forehead slightly raised, eyes, hands, legs, thighs and my ankles are symmetrical; my fingers are soft, symmetrical in their middle and marked with barley corn; the nails are round and breasts plump and hard and their nipples

1 An occult science that can predict one's nature and fortune from palmistry.

embedded in them ; my navel in the middle is deep, its sides are raised and my breast is high ; my colour is bright as that of a jewel ; the hair of my body is soft as down and my smile is sweet and gentle. From these signs women called me auspicious. Even the Brahmanas versed in astrology used to tell me that I would be invested with crown along with a king of kings. But all these have now proved to be false. Alas! these two brothers who freed Janasthana from its source of trouble, gathered information about me, and crossed the sea, at last succumbed to an insignificant thing! These two heroes acquired mastery over Varuna, Agneya, Aindra, and Brahmashira weapons. Why could they not remember those arms at the time of the conflict? These two heroes are the shelter of the helpless.

"Alas! Indrajit has slain them simply through his magic, himself remaining invisible. An enemy endowed even with the speed of thought, could not escape from Rama in open fight. Nothing is too heavy or impossible for Time, and death is irresistible, or Rama and Lakshmana would not have been thus destroyed. Now, I do not grieve so much for them, or for my mother, as for my mother-in-law, since she is ever thinking when she will see Rama coming back with Lakshmana and Janaki from the exile in the forest."

Then Trijata seeing Janaki thus lamenting said, "O worshipful lady! do not be so overwhelmed with grief, your husband is alive. Just hear me why I say so. Look at

the expressions of the warriors. How eager and angry they are. Had your husband, their leader, been dead, they would not have looked like this, nor this heavenly chariot would have carried you here. I assure you, had Rama been dead, the Vanara troops could not have been so free from anxiety. By this time they would have been scattered like boats without their helmsmen. I can infer that Rama and Lakshmana have not been slain. O worshipful lady! by your conduct you have touched my heart and become dear to me. Never did I assure you falsely on any former occasion, nor do I hold out any false consolation to you. To speak the truth, neither the gods, nor the Asuras, nor Indra can destroy those heroes. I can assure you about this from their appearance. Janaki! This is the only thing to be wondered at, that they lie inert and senseless under the Nagapasa. Their beauty is still in them; had they been dead their faces would surely have been distorted, but their beauty remains untarnished. So do not grieve for them; banish your sorrow."

Hearing these words of Trijata, Janaki, like the daughter of a god, said with joined palms, "O sister! may what you say prove to be true."

After that Janaki returned with Trijata in the swift Pushpaka car. She got down from the vehicle and was conducted by the Rakshasis to the Asoka forest, where she began to think of Rama and Lakshmana.

CHAPTER XXXII

GRIEF OF RAMA

Rama and Lakshmana lay prostrate under the terrible Nagapasa. They were panting heavily like snakes and their bodies were besmeared with blood. Sugriva and other Vanaras with sorrowful hearts surrounded the two brothers. Rama, though firmly tied down under the Nagapasa, still, on account of his great physical strength, first gained his consciousness and finding Lakshmana lying prostrate with a pained countenance, began to lament, "Alas! what shall I do with Janaki when the heroic Lakshmana has thus fallen. What further necessity is there for life? I may find out, if I search the world for it, another woman like Janaki, but never a brother and a warrior like Lakshmana. If he be dead, I shall certainly give up my life. If I return to Ayodhya without Lakshmana, how shall I console mother Sumitra shaking with grief, and how shall I break the news to Bharata and Satrughana? Lakshmana was my companion in exile; how can I now return home without him. In fact, when Sumitra will take me to task for this, I shall never be able to bear that. Therefore I shall give up my life on this spot. Alas! curse on me, for me the heroic Lakshmana has died a miserable death. Brother Lakshmana! you used to console me in my sorrows and pain, you are now lying senseless. Therefore, you cannot greet me now though stricken with sorrow. O hero! You hast fallen on the field where you yourself had destroyed

a large number of Rakshasas. Your body is bathed in blood, it bristles with arrows sticking to it and you lie on a heap of shafts. For this you look like the setting sun. You have been pierced by arrows in your vital parts, and for this you are now mute. But from your expression and look, the pain of being struck is evident. You followed me in my exile and this day I shall follow you to the realm of Death. You are affectionate towards your kinsmen and ever obedient to me. Now, you had to suffer on account of the misdeed of my heinous self. I do not remember to have ever heard you using any harsh expression towards me even in great anger. Your valour is quite formidable. You could discharge five hundred arrows at a stretch, so your prowess is greater than that of Kartavirya. Alas! he who could thwart even Indra's blows by his arrows, who was wont to lie on elegant beds, is now rolling in the dust! I could not install Vibhishana as ruler of the Rakshasas, and therefore this false promise will scorch me for ever. Sugriva! you have become weak on account of myself being overwhelmed wirh sorrow. Now you will surely meet with defeat at Ravana's hands; so leave the place instantly. Sugriva! just cross back the sea with Nila, Angada, Nala and with your troops and their belongings. You have accomplished a very arduous task. Riksha king, the lord of the Golangulas, Angada, Mainda and Dvivida have also done great deeds. The heroic Kesari, Sampati, Gaya, Gavaksha, Sarabha, Gaja and other Vanaras have fought

with great valour. These things have no doubt been a source of great delight to me, but man can never overrule his fate. You are my friend and a virtuous man. You have done what lay in your power, but that has been frustrated on account of my bad luck. O Vanaras! You have acted as friends. Now I ask you to go wherever you wish" Then the Vanaras began to shed tears hearing Rama lamenting thus. At that time, Vibhishana after encouraging the troops, was coming towards Rama with a mace in his hand. The Vanaras seeing that dark-skinned hero coming there all on a sudden took him for Indrajit and dispersed in different directions.

Then Sugriva said, "Look why the army has become so suddenly agitated, as a craft is tossed by a heavy gale."

Angada replied, "Don't you see that Rama and Lakshmana are lying in blood being smitten with arrows?"

Sugriva said, "No, that is not the reason; perhaps there is something else to account for it. Look there, the troops with their eyes dilated with fear are running away throwing off their arms in panic. They do not feel ashamed of this cowardly act. Nobody looks behind and in hurry they are trampling over the fallen ones."

In the meantime Vibhishana having arrived there, wished victory to Rama and Sugriva. Thereupon Sugriva addressing Jamvuvan said, "The noble Vibhishana has come. The Vanaras took him for Indrajit and they are running away

in fear. Just assure them that it is Vibhishana that has come."

Then Jamvuvan by his assurance stopped them from flight, and the Vanaras came back finding him to be Vibhishana. Vibhishana was greatly pained at the sight of Rama and Lakshmana, and having wiped their eyes with his hand with water, said, "These two heroes are great warriors, the Rakshasas have overcome them only by their subtle strategy. They were engaged in a fair fight, but my nephew Indrajit is a cunning warrior and he has bound them in Nagapasa by his Rakshasi magic. Relying upon their prowess I coveted to rule over the Rakshasas, now they are lying on the ground, as if waiting for death. My ambition is gone and the cruel desire of the abductor of Sita has now been fulfilled."

Then Sugriva embracing Vibhishana said, "My noble friend, you are virtuous ; you will surely occupy Lanka. Ravana will never succeed. These two brothers are worshippers of Garuda[1] and they will soon recover their sense and destroy Ravana with his brood."

Sugriva after consoling Vibhishana, addressing his father-in-law Sushena, said, "O Arya ! so long as Rama and Lakshmana remain unconscious, you return to Kishkindhya with them and the other Vanaras. I shall myself destroy Ravana with his friends and sons and as Indra

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1 Garuda—(the eagle) is an enemy of the Nagas (the serpents). Hence it means that they were tied down by snakes. Nagapasa means binding with snakes.

retrieved the glory of the gods so I shall recover Janaki."

Thereupon Sushena said, "My boy! formerly I witnessed the fight between the gods and the Asuras, and in that the Danavas skilled in the use of arms destroyed the gods by their demoniac magic. The preceptor of the gods—Vrihaspati—treated, with medicines and mantras, the gods thus rendered senseless and wounded. Let Sampati and Panasa hasten to the Milky Sea for those remedies. The name of that medicine is Visalya Karani. It is heavenly and it grows on hills and that is not unknown to the Vanaras. At the spot where rose nectar after the churning of the Ocean, there are two mountains named Chandra and Drona, the medicine is obtainable at that place alone. Let Hanuman proceed there."

[1] In the meantime, clouds overcast the sky and there were repeated thunder claps and lightning flashes. Heavy gales began to blow and the hills began to shake, and islands began to fall into pieces, as if by the beatings of the wings. The huge pythons and snakes that resided in the Malaya mountain became restless and entered into the depths of the ocean out of great fear.

Then the Vanaras saw the formidable Garuda in a moment. At the sight of Garuda the terrible snakes that bound Rama and Lakshmana ran away in alarm. The heroic Garuda smoothed their moonlike faces with his palms.

1 It should be claws if it be a bird.

At his very touch their bruised faces regained their former loveliness. They regained their former grace, strength, valour, energy, memory and intelligence.

Garuda then raised the great hero and embracing Rama with a gratified heart, said, "O hero! we have been rescued from a great danger through your kindness. I feel overjoyed at your sight, as I would have been at the sight of father Dasaratha and grandfather Aja. You are beautiful to look at and are adorned with heavenly ornaments and wear an excellent garland on your neck. You are clad in elegant apparel. Tell me who you are." Garuda, with eyes expanded with delight, said, "Rama! I am your friend; my name is Garuda. I have come here to help you in difficulty. The powerful Asuras, Indra, the gods, Gandharvas and the Vanaras could not deliver you from the bondage under which Indrajit kept you by the spell of magic. These serpents are terrible and are most obedient to Indrajit, and they, through magic, have assumed the form of arrows. Rama! you and the victorious Lakshmana are really fortunate. As soon as I had come to hear of this bondage, I came here to rescue you from that. I have removed that bondage. Now, always be on the alert. The Rakshasas, by nature, are cunning, whereas you are quite simple; so do not believe the Rakshasas on the battle-field. Be careful from this incident of Indrajit."

Saying this Garuda, embracing Rama, broke forth again, "Rama! you are virtuous; you

have kindness even for your enemies; now allow me to depart. Don't be curious to know what is the cause of this fond affection between you and me. You will know everything when you win the war. Only the aged and the young will survive your arrows, and you will soon succeed in rescuing Janaki after destroying Ravana."

With these words, Garuda, the king of birds wheeled round Rama and went along the sky with the speed of the wind. Then the leaders finding Rama and Lakshmana quite hale and hearty repeatedly lashed their tails and set up heroic roars. Mridangas were beaten, trumpets and conch-shells were blown. The Vanaras threw their arms up and roared in delight. Their roarings were heard like the rumbling of distant thunder-clouds in rainy nights.

CHAPTER XXXIII

RAVANA'S ANXIETY

Ravana, hearing the shouts of the Vanaras, said in the presence of all, "When the heroic yells of the Vanaras, like distant thunder, are now heard, certainly there has been some cause of their delight. They, by their roars, have agitated even the sea. Rama and Lakshmana are tied fast in Nagapasa, still the Vanaras are moving in delight, this has caused grave apprehension in my mind. Go and soon find out the cause of this joy amongst the Vanaras."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas hurriedly issued

forth at the command of Ravana and, ascending the city-wall they found that Rama and Lakshmana had been delivered from the Nagapasa and Sugriva was busily engaged in protecting the Vanara troops. At that sight, the Rakshasas were greatly mortified, and their faces grew pale and sad. Then they descended from the wall in fear and returning to Ravana, said, "O royal sire! we found the two formidable warriors delivered from the bondage under which Indrajit kept them inert and powerless."

Ravana became anxious at this news; his face also grew dark and pale. He then said, "The arrows that Indrajit acquired through austere penance are irresistible like snakes and glittering like the sun. Indrajit felled those two enemies of mine with that arrow. If it is true that they have been liberated from the bondage of those arrows, then, surely, there is danger to all the troops. Alas! could that irresistible shaft be frustrated like this?"

Ravana then panted with great rage and addressing Dhumraksha said, "O hero! take a large number of soldiers with you and immediately advance to slay Rama and Lakshmana in battle."

Thereupon, Dhumraksha went round Ravana and issued forth for battle and after crossing the gate of the palace, he said to the commander, "I am going to fight, bring the army soon." Then the commander got the army ready for battle. The Rakshasas surrounded Dhumraksha with their heroic roars. They were formidable and

bellicose. Bells rang at their waists and they had different weapons in their hands. Those soldiers came out thundering like the clouds, carrying various weapons, as Sula, Mudgara, Gada, Pattisa, iron staffs, Mushala, Parigha, Bhindipala, Bhalla, noose and axe. Some clad in armour got upon jewelled chariots decorated with flags and staffs; some upon asses; some upon elephants. Thus the Rakshasa army issued forth like lions in their batches. Heroic Dhumraksha got himself equipped and got upon a chariot drawn by asses with tiger-like and lion-like faces.[1] He proceeded with great speed in his deep-rumbling car towards the western gate where stood Hanuman with a smiling face. At that time, the birds forbade him to advance and a huge vulture fell upon the crest of his chariot. Then other ravenous birds fell upon his chariot. A huge, white decapitated corpse besmeared with blood, fell before him. The clouds began to rain blood, the wind began to blow furiously, and the earth shook repeatedly. Dhumraksha became depressed at the sight of those evil omens, and the warriors that proceeded before him were also greatly stupefied by these portents.

The great warrior then advancing found the vast Vanara army like an angry ocean theatening destruction, protected by the prowess of Rama.

1 Tiger-like and lion-like faces, of course, mean menacing looks. Asses and mules for some purposes are still preferred to horses in military departments.

Chapter XXXIV

DHUMRAKSHA'S FIGHT

The Vanaras seeing Dhumraksha advancing for a fight, roared with the joy of battle. Then a severe conflict ensued between the two sides. The Rakshasas began to scatter away and cut the Vanaras, and the Vanaras too levelled the Rakshasas to the ground by the blows of trees. The Rakshasas in anger, with their sharp weapons, cut the Vanaras in pieces. The Vanaras became more furious at this and began to fight more bravely. Their bodies were bleeding from the blows of the different weapons of the Rakshasas and they began to destroy the Rakshasas with their huge stones and trees. Gradually the field of battle grew quite dreadful. The dauntless Vanaras began to strike the Rakshasas with trees and stones and the blood-drinking Rakshasas began to vomit blood. Some one's flank was torn, some one was cut with teeth, some one crumbled into atoms. Some one was slain with the flag-staff, and some with the sword slipped from his own hand, and some by the chariot-wheels. Soon the battle-field became strewn with the carcasses of elephants, horses, their riders, Vanaras and the Rakshasas. The Vanaras by springing seized the faces of Rakshasas and tore them by their sharp nails. The countenances of the Rakshasas grew dark and they rushed forward to beat the Vanaras. The Vanaras too forcibly threw them on the ground and began to assault them with kicks and fist-blows, with trees and their teeth.

The heroic Dhumraksha seeing the Rakshasa giving way commenced a terrible battle. Some of the Vanaras were hit with the Prasa weapon and began to bleed, some fell on the ground being hit by clubs, some were destroyed by Parigha, Pattisa or by Bhindipala. Many ran away, in fear, from the enraged Rakshasas. Some one was pierced to the heart, another was lying on his side, still another was forked by a trident and some one's intestines bulged out. Thus the horrible fight went on. Then the song of Death broke out in the battle-field, the twang of the bow was its lyre, the gasping hiccough of the dying soldiers kept time with that music, and the trumpetings of the elephants served the purpose of the vocal music. The heroic Dhumraksha thus began to smother the Vanaras at ease.

Thereafter Hanuman seeing the Vanaras thus overcome by the arrows of the Rakshasas, advanced towards Dhumraksha with a huge block of stone. His eyes grew red from anger. He was, in his prowess, like his father. Hanuman aimed that huge stone against Dhumraksha ; seeing that stone hurled against him he jumped down from his chariot and stood on the ground with a club in his hand. That huge stone pulverised his chariot into atoms. Hanuman then began to beat the Rakshasas by uprooting a tree. The Rakshasas fell on the ground with broken heads. In the meantime, Hanuman raised a huge stone and rushed towards Dhumraksha. At this, Dhumraksha with a heoric roar advanced mace in hand and hurled it

against Hanuman's head in great rage. But that iron-piked mace proved futile. Then Hanuman broke Dhumraksha's head with that stone. Dhumraksha at once fell prostrate on the ground like a mountain peak. The Rakshasas were greatly alarmed at this and hied towards Lanka.

Thus Hanuman destroyed the enemies and caused a river of blood to flow in the field of battle. Hanuman at last got exhausted and the Vanaras began to praise him again and again.

CHAPTER XXXV

VAJRADANSTRA

Ravana was greatly enraged at the news of Dhumraksha's death, and then addressing Vajradanstra said, "O hero! just proceed with an army and kill my sworn enemy Rama with Sugriva and other Vanaras."

Vajradanstra immediately set out at this command of Ravana. A large number of elephants, camels, horses and asses followed him in that struggle. Vajradanstra was adorned with an excellent crown and arm-plates and he had a magnificent armour on his person. He got upon a golden chariot decorated with flags, with bow and quiver in his hands. The infantry followed his car carrying with them Risthis, Tomaras, Musalas, Bhindipalas, Saktis, Pattisas, Chakras, bows, axes and maces. The Rakshasas

were elegantly dressed and they marched like infuriated elephants, and they in their march collectively appeared like a mountain in motion! Veteran fighters with Ankusas and Tomaras proceeded on elephants. A large number of cavalry men advanced, mounted on fine chargers. At that time the advancing column of the Rakshasa troops looked like clouds of the rainy season charged with thunder and lightning. They then gradually reached the southern gate where stood Angada. In their march they met with several evil portents. Meteors fell from a cloudless sky, fierce jackals began to howl fearfully, emitting fire from their mouths. Soldiers began to stumble violently on the ground. In spite of these evil omens Vajradanstra in his eagerness for fight proceeded undisturbed towards the field of battle. The Vanaras, thus seeing the Rakshasas advancing towards them, set up a heroic yell, filling all quarters with that sound.

Then a fierce fight ensued between the formidable Vanaras and the Rakshasas. The valiant warriors (on both sides) fell on the ground with their heads and limbs severed from their bodies. Some hurled against his rival various weapons having failed to overcome him by wrestling, or fought with hands long and firm as a bolt. The battle-field was soon filled with a terrible din with the noise of trumpets, the rumbling noise of the chariots, twangs of the bows, sound of the conch-shells and beatings of Mridanga. Some threw down their arms and began to wrestle with his adversary. Some were slain by fist-

blows, or being struck with trees, kicks or slaps. A number of Rakshasas were crushed by the stones hurled against them by the Vanaras.

At that, heroic Vajradanshtra to frighten the enemy began to roam about in the battle-field with Pasa in his hand. The powerful Rakshasas became quite restive and began to smother the Vanaras with their sharp weapons. Then the molested Hanuman flared up in rage and energy. Angada began to strike the Rakshasas with uprooted trees, as the lion kills the small animals. The powerful Rakshasa soldiers fell on the field with broken heads like trees cut down. Then the battle-field grew fearful with blood and dead bodies of both the parties. Here and there lay scattered arm-plates, apparel and umbrellas. At last, the Rakshasas became restless on account of Angada's prowess. At this the great warrior, Vajradanshtra became highly enraged and began to shower thunderbolts like arrows upon the Vanaras. Other Rakshasa warriors also began to discharge volleys of deadly arrows from their chariots. The Vanaras in a body fought against them with stones and trees. The Rakshasas hurled various weapons against the Vanaras who, too, hurled stones and trees against them. Then a fierce struggle ensued between the two parties. Heads were broken, legs and hands were cut off, and the battle-field became littered with dead bodies of both sides. Crows, vultures and other ravenous birds of prey fell upon the carcasses and made a terrible noise by their clamour. Headless trunks to the terror of the timid, often rose from the field.

Afterwards the Rakshasas being struck with trees and stones ran away from the battle-field. Again Vajradanshtra in great wrath entered the Vanara line and began to create havoc amongst them with his arrows. The Vanaras being wounded by his sharp arrows dispersed before him in different directions and all ran to Angada in fear, as the created beings approached Brahma, the Lord of creation.

Seeing that, Angada cast an angry look upon Vajradanshtra, and Vajradanshtra too, scrutinised him with angry eyes. Then a great battle raged between the two heroes, and they roamed about the battle-field like two infuriated elephants. Vajradanshtra pierced Angada's heart with flaming arrows. Angada became drenched with blood, and he hurled a huge tree aiming at Vajradanshtra, but the latter cut it down to pieces at ease.

Thereupon Angada took up a huge rock and threw it against Vajradanshtra. Vajradanshtra hurriedly got down from his chariot and patiently waited with a mace in hand, and the chariot with the horses was crushed into pieces. Angada immediately hurled a huge tree on the head of Vajradanshtra. Vajradanshtra fainted at that blow and began to vomit blood. After regaining consciousness, he struck Angada on the chest with his mace. These two warriors appeared like Mercury and Jupiter in the field of battle. Then the two heroes unseathed[1]

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1 In the original we have the blade made of Rishibha hide, and the sword covered with a girdle of

their swords and began to fight against each other with great fencing skill in the course of which they performed various kinds of wonderful movements. Both set up heroic roars being anxious for victory. Both were badly injured with sword-thrusts, and with their bleeding bodies they looked like two Kinsuka trees that stood in their crimson blossoms. Both of them suddenly knelt down on the ground. Then Angada instantly got up like a molested serpent, and cut down Vajradanshtra's head with his sharp sword. The Rakshasas were greatly alarmed at Vajradanshtra's death. Vajradanshtra's head rolled on the dust and blood spurted out like jets of water. Rakshasas, thereupon, overwhelmed with fear, slowly retired towards Lanka with sorrowful hearts.

Here Angada was surrounded by the Vanaras for his victory and was thanked and honoured profusely for his heroic deed.

Chapter XXXVI

AKAMPANA'S FIGHT

Ravana became furious at the news of Vajradanshtra's death and addressing Prahasta who was standing by with joined palms, said, "Prahasta! let Akampana now proceed with the powerful Rakshasas skilled in the art of war. This undaunted hero is the defender of the

small tinkling bells. Apparently it is a mistake. It refers to the hilt and the scabbard.

army in battle. He is most enthusiastic in war, and is always eager to perform what will bring forth good. Now, this great hero will destroy Rama, Lakshmana, and Sugriva in battle."

At this commandment of the Rakshasa lord, the Rakshasa army got ready for the fight. The grim-looking troops with formidable arms issued forth from Lanka. That great undaunted warrior was dark like a cloud, and his voice was deep like the rumbling of a cloud. Him even the gods could not render nervous in the field of battle. That hero mounting on a golden chariot set forth with the Rakshasas in great anger for fight. At that time, all on a sudden evil portents of various kinds appeared on every side. The horses of Akampana suddenly grew weak, and their left eyes began to throb. The wind began to blow in violence and the ravenous beasts and birds of prey began to howl. But that lion-like hero remained quite unmoved by them. The Vanaras, however, waited with trees and stones for the approach of the Rakshasas.

A fierce fight commenced. Both the sides exerted their utmost for victory—one side for Rama and the other side for Ravana. They began to howl in anger and to fight with all their might. Dust raised by the trampling of the warriors covered the sky. Nobody could discern his friend or foe. Only the heroic yells and the sound of their swift tread were being heard. Chariots, horses, weapons, shields, etc., could not at all be distinguished in that darkness. Vanaras slew Vanaras, and the Rakshasas

in fury the Rakshasas, for none could distinguish friend from foe. At last, the field of battle grew muddy with blood. Both sides fought with trees, clubs, maces, stones, prasas, parighas and tomaras. The Vanaras struck the giant Rakshasas with their fist-blows. The Rakshasas too, being furious began to destroy the Vanaras with prasas and tomaras. Akampana[1] began to encourage the formidable Rakshasas to fight. In the meantime, the Vanaras forcibly snatched away the arms from the Rakshasas and began to destroy them with stones. Then the heroic Nala, Kumuda and Mainda commenced a fierce fight in anger. They slew a large number of Rakshasas by hurling trees and stones at them.

Chapter XXXVII

THE GREAT SALLY

Thereupon Akampana became greatly enraged, and by twanging his bow he said to his charioteer, "Look there, the powerful Vanaras are destroying a large number of the Rakshasas. They are standing with trees and stones at a short distance from this place, take me there quickly. They are very proud of their fighting capacity, I shall destroy them now. It seems they will kill all the Rakshasas."

Then the charioteer drove the chariot accord-

1 Akampana means the "unmoved," perhaps something like a permanent epithet to his name, as Sir Bedevere "the bold."

ing to the above directions of the heroic Akampana. Akampana approached the Vanara hosts by discharging arrows from a distance. The Vanaras, not to speak of fighting, could not stand before that hero. They ran away from the fight. Then Hanuman approached Akampana seeing the Vanaras thus dispersed in fear.

The Vanaras gathered round Hanuman and they became courageous at the presence of that great hero.

Then Akampana showered his arrows upon Hanuman like tropical rains. Hanuman, without minding the shafts discharged against him, resolved to kill the enemy at that time, and advanced towards him by shaking the earth by his heroic tread. Being fired up by his valour he began to roar repeatedly. He then grew quite formidable like a burning flame, and finding himself without any arms, uprooted a huge rock in great fury. That great hero began to whirl that huge stone in hand. And as Indra, in former times, rushed towards Namuchi with thunderbolt in his hand, so he rushed towards him in great speed.

Thereupon Akampana seeing that huge rock aimed against him, cut it in pieces with his crescent-shaped arrow from a distance. Hanuman grew furious at this and he uprooted a large Aswakarna tree in heroic pride and began to whirl it in battle-delight. Then he rushed towards Akampana with that tree in great speed. Trees were broken by the violence of his speed. He began to destroy elephants, horses with

riders, their charioteers. The Rakshasas finding him like a second Death ran away in fear.

Then Akampana seeing Hanuman approaching pierced him with fourteen shafts with a heroic roar. Hanuman being struck with the Narachas and the Saktis, looked like a peak abounding with trees! And he looked like a column of smokeless fire, like an asoka tree in blossoms. Then, that great hero uprooted a huge tree and crushed Akampana's head with one blow. Akampana was instantly killed. At that sight the Rakshasas grew restless and were agitated like trees at the time of earthquake. The Rakshasas were thus vanquished and they ran away in fear. The Vanaras hotly pursued the Rakshasas, who repeatedly looked behind and rushed towards the city-gate by trampling each other in great hurry.

When Akampana was thus slain by Hanuman, the Vanaras praised the great hero for his mighty deed. Hanuman being thus honoured showed modesty to them. The Vanaras set up heroic yells in battle-delight and resolved to destroy the remaining Rakshasas. As Vishnu looked formidable after the destruction of the great Madhukaitabha, so Hanuman looked quite irresistible after the death of Akampana. Then the gods began to praise Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman and the other Vanaras for their great heroic feats.

Chapter XXXVIII

PRAHASTA'S FIGHT

At the news of Akampana's death, Ravana cast a sorrowful glance towards his counsellors. Then after a brief consultation with them, Ravana, after deciding the course of action, issued forth to inspect the army. He saw Lanka decorated with flags and banners, and guarded by large divisions of the Rakshasa army. Then Ravana addressing General Prahasta said, "O hero! this city of Lanka has now been besieged by the enemy; there is no other way to relieve the city without fighting. But except myself, Kumbhakarna, yourself, Indrajit and Nikumbha, who else will undertake that task? Therefore soon proceed with a large number of troops for achieving victory. The Vanaras will surely run away at your sight. The Vanaras are weak and unruly, and as the roars of the lion are unbearable to the elephants, so they won't be able to stand your heroic yells. If they are thus rendered reluctant to fight, Rama and Lakshmana will seek our shelter, being deprived of help. O hero! in this battle, your death is uncertain, whereas your victory is certain. So you should fight or tell me what is favourable or unfavourable in words that I have just now said to you."

Then Prahasta, like Sukracharya advising the king of the Asuras, said to Ravana, "O king! we discussed this matter with wise counsellors before. Then there were differences of opinion

among us. It was then decided that it would have been better to return Sita, or there would be war. Now, that war has begun. You have put me ever under obligation by bestowing on me wealth and honour. I shall do now what is good for you at this time of danger. I do not covet my life, nor my wife and children, nor wealth. I shall sacrifice my life for you in this war."

Then Prahasta addressing the Generals in front of him, said :

"Soon get the whole army ready. This day the ravenous beasts and birds of the forest will be gratified with the flesh and blood of the enemy slain by my arrows."

Thereupon, the Generals got the army ready, and in a moment, the city of Lanka became restive with the movements of the formidable warriors. A terrific din filled all quarters. Some offered sacrifice to fire and some bowed to the Brahmanas. At that time, the wind carried the scent of the sacrificial offerings. The troops put on armours and garlands and stood ready for the march. Then they got upon their elephants and horses, and after paying their homage to Ravana, gathered round Prahasta with bows in their hands. Then Prahasta got upon an excellent chariot, after greeting Ravana and blowing the trumpet. The chariot was furnished with various weapons, it was yoked with swift horses and was bright like the sun and the moon. Its rumbling noise was deep like that of cloud, and its charioteer was an expert. It was

decorated with flags and festoons. That chariot having the serpent-banner streaming over it and covered with a golden net, shone with splendour. General Prahasta set forth in that chariot, accompanied by his vast army. Deep trumpets and dundubhis sounded like the rumbling clouds. The sound of conch-shells and of other musical instruments filled the air. The Rakshasas preceded their General with heroic yells. Narantaka, Kumbhahanu, Mahanada and Samunnata were the four advisers of Prahasta. They were grim-looking and huge-bodied. All these warriors proceeded along with Prahasta. Prahasta, grim as Death, with his army vast as the sea and strong as herds of elephants, crossed the eastern gate. The noise of his march mixed up with the heroic roars of the Rakshasas frightened the beasts and birds of Lanka. Then various kinds of evil omens were visible. Ravenous birds of prey began to fly under the sky and follow on the right side of the chariot. Fierce jackals began to howl. Meteors began to fall in showers. Heavy gales began to blow. The stars and planets grew dim.[1] Clouds began to rain blood on Prahasta's chariot and his troops. A vulture sat upon the flag-staff of Prahasta's car, and by its cries it darkened Prahasta's face.

The whip again and again slipped from the

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1 The reader will note that in dealing with the battle of each Rakshasa General, the same thing has been repeated again and again, so instead of repeating one and the same thing, we have summarised the portions where it could be done without injuring the original text.

hand of the experienced charioteer, the beauty and splendour of that march were gone, and horses began to stumble on the ground. In the meantime the Vanaras seeing Prahasta advancing, went forward with trees and stones. Some Vanaras plucked stones, while others giant trees. Then a great noise ensued. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas yelled in war-joy and began to challenge one another.

In the meantime, the ill-fated Prahasta entered the Vanara line as a moth plunges into a burning flame.

Then Rama, seeing Prahasta, asked Vibhishana with a smiling face, "Rakshasa chief! who is that hero that is coming with a large host of Rakshasas and how formidable is he?"

Vibhishana replied, "O hero! that warrior is the commander-in-chief of Ravana, his name is Prahasta. One-third of the army of Lanka has come with him. He is bellicose, skilled in arms, and his prowess is known all over."

After that the Vanaras got sight of Prahasta. Prahasta was quite formidable and grim-looking. Then a great uproar arose amongst the Vanaras and they began to yell and threatened the Rakshasas coming with Prahasta. The Rakshasas had various kinds of weapons in their hands. Some had swords, some Saktis, some Rishtis, some Sulas (spears), some arrows, some Prasas, some axes, and some bows. They rushed impetuously towards the Vanaras. The Vanaras too, advanced with huge trees and stones. As soon

as the two sides drew near, a fierce fight ensued. The Vanaras hurled trees and stones whereas the Rakshasas began to discharge volleys of arrows.[1] The Vanaras killed a number of Rakshasas, and Rakshasas a large number of Vanaras. They cut and wounded one another with various weapons. The heroic Rakshasas pierced the Vanaras with their arrows and the Vanaras crushed their enemies with stones and trees. Gradually, the battle-field was filled with the groans and heroic yells of the combatants. Both the sides were determined.

A number of Vanaras fell at the hands of Narantaka, Kumbhahanu, Mahanada and Samunnata. Then Dvivida slew Narantaka with a stone. Durmukha killed Samunnata with an uprooted tree ; Jamvuvan slew Mahanada with a stone and Kapi-Pravira killed Kumbhahanu with a stone.

Thereupon, Prahasta commenced a fearful fight. A mighty eddy was formed in the battle-field by the constant motion of the troops. And there arose a deep sound like the rolling of the sea. The formidable warrior, Prahasta, made the Vanaras reel under his blows. By degrees, the field of battle became littered with dead bodies, and rivers of blood began to flow. The field of battle grew beautiful like the forest at the advent of summer[2] and the whole place

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1 It is apparent from the above descriptions that the Rakshasas had a civilised mode of warfare, and they were far advanced in the use of arms.

2 Perhaps profusion of blood has been likened to

impassable like a great river, having the dead soldiers for its banks, the broken weapons for the trees, the stream of blood for its water, liver and spleens for its thick mud, scattered arms for its weeds, severed heads for its fishes, the blood-thirsty vultures for its swans, the fat for its foam, and the heroic yell for the sound of eddies! That fearful river flowing towards the ocean of Death struck terror into the minds of the cowards, but the brave crossed it with ease, as an elephant does a tank filled with full-blown lotuses.

After that General Nila rushed against Prahasta, as the wind rushes forward to meet the cloud in great speed. Thereupon, Prahasta advanced towards Nila and began to discharge his arrows incessantly at him. Prahasta's shafts entered deep into Nila's body, like cruel snakes into their holes. Then Nila struck Prahasta with a tree. Prahasta discharged a volley of arrows at Nila in anger. Then Nila being unable to disarm villainous Prahasta, calmly bore the arrows, like a bull that with closed eyes bears the sudden outbreak of an autumnal rain.

Then Nila destroyed the horses of Prahasta by striking them with a Sala tree, and breaking his bow into two pieces set up heroic roars. Then Prahasta jumped from his chariot and rushed towards Nila with a fearful Mushala in his hand. Then the two formidable rivals

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the crimson blossoms of summer, hence the simile, though a very unlikely one.

looked like two infuriated elephants staring at each other for a fatal engagement. Both of them were furious and strong as lions, and both of them struggled for victory and both of them were eager for fame like Indra and Vritra Asura.

Meanwhile, Prahasta with great difficulty struck Nila with a Mushala. Nila was highly enraged at this and struck Prahasta on the heart with a tree. Prahasta without paying any heed to that blow rushed forward with a Mushala. Nila then picked up a huge stone and threw it against Prahasta's head. Prahasta at once gave up the ghost, and blood sprouted like a spring.

On the death of formidable Prahasta, the Rakshasa army ran towards Lanka in great panic. As the water rushes forth when the dam gives in, so the army could not stay on the battle-field at the death of their general. All, dispirited and overwhelmed with sorrow, entered Lanka. Deep sorrow made them mute.

Heroic Nila in delight of victory approached Rama and Lakshmana. At that time every one praised him for his heroic deed.

CHAPTER XXXIX

RAVANA'S FIGHTING

Then the Rakshasas appearing before Ravana informed him of Prahasta's death. Ravana was greatly overwhelmed with sorrow and rage at

this news. Ravana then addressing them said, "Hear me, O Rakshasas! we should no more slight those enemies who have slain my general, Prahasta, the destroyer of the heavenly hosts. I shall, therefore, myself now take the field. As fire burns the wood, so I shall reduce Rama, Lakshmana and the Vanaras to ashes."

Thus saying Ravana got upon his chariot, black as cinder, and yoked with noble steeds. Conch-shells, trumpets and panavas were blown. The Rakshasa warriors began to brag of their prowess. The Rakshasa king, honoured and worshipped by his people, immediately set forth for battle. Being surrounded by the grim-looking Rakshasas—huge as shining mountains—with burning eyes, Ravana looked like God Rudra surrounded by his goblins and genii. On coming out, Ravana found the Vanara army—vast as the sea—waiting for the fight with trees and stones in their hands.

Then mighty Rama, formidable like the king of the serpents, seeing the powerful Rakshasa hosts questioned Vibhishana, "O Rakshasa chief! whose army is that who are equipped with swords, lances, Prasa and various other weapons? They are mounted upon huge elephants like the Mandara hills and are carrying flags and royal umbrellas amongst them?" Noble Vibhishana replied, "O king! that hero who is seated upon an elephant, whose face is red like the morning sun and who by the weight of his body has rendered the head of his

elephant shaky, is Akampana.[1] The hero who in his chariot is twanging the bow—like the rainbow—and whose flag bears the ensign of a lion, is the foremost of the Rakshasas; his name is Indrajit. He who is tall like the Vindhya, Asta and Mahendra hills and who is drawing constantly, a big bow, is heroic Atikaya. He whose eyes are red like the morning sun and who is setting up a heroic yell seated upon an elephant with tinkling bells attached to its neck, is Mahodara. He who is red like an evening cloud and is riding a bright charger adorned with gold, and who is carrying the glittering Pasa arm in his hand is swift Pisacha. He who is coming with impetuous speed riding on a beautiful bull, holding a sharp lance like lightning, is famous Trisira. That dark-skinned hero, whose chest is wide and high, whose flag bears the ensign of a snake, and who is repeatedly drawing his bow, is Kumbha. He who is advancing with a jewelled Parigha weapon and whose heroic feats are quite amazing, is heroic Nikumbha. And he who is seated in a bright chariot decorated with flags, and furnished with various kinds of weapons is Narantaka. And he who is the vanquisher of the pride of the gods and who is surrounded by grim-visaged Rakshasas, like God Rudra by his ghastly crew, and over whose head stands the moon-like white umbrealla with thin spokes, is Ravana, the king of the Rakshasas. Look what a beautiful diadem adorns his head and jewelled ear-rings

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1 He must be a different person from the warrior whose death has already been described.

ear-rings in his ears! He is formidable in stature like the Himalayas or the Vindhya hill. He has humbled the pride of Indra and the king of death. He is vigorous like the sun."

Thereupon, Rama said, "Ah! how mighty is this Rakshasa king, Ravana! He, by his own lustre, has rendered himself quite incapable of being gazed upon. In fact, his whole person is surrounded by a halo of energy like light, so I could not survey his real form. His physique is more splendid than that of the gods and the Gandharvas. His followers too are stalwart and equipped with sharp weapons. Ravana being surrounded by these grim-looking followers, looks like the king of death surrounded by the ghosts. It is my good luck that he has come within my view. I shall now wreak my anger on him for abducting my Sita." With these words, Rama stood up, bow in hand.

In the meantime, Ravana addressing the mighty Rakshasas said, "Go inside the city and live there without any anxiety or fear. Guard the city-gates and the highways. You have come in a body with me, if the Vanaras come to know of it, they will surely enter the empty city."

His counsellors then proceeded to their destinations at this command of Ravana.

After that, as an elephant enters a big stream, so Ravana entered the Vanara line. At the sight of Ravana, Sugriva, the Kapi chief, rushed forward with trees and stones and hurled a mountain peak against him. The great hero, Ravana,

cut that stone in pieces by his gold-plated arrows, and being enraged, discharged a fatal arrow, terrible as a huge snake. That shaft was swift like lightning and wind, and was emitting sparks like crackling) fire. Ravana aimed that arrow to kill Sugriva with it. Then that arrow penetrated into Sugriva's body as the arrows of Kumara[1] formerly cleft the Krauncha hill. Sugriva fainted on the ground with a piteous groan. The Rakshasas, thereupon, roared in delight.

Then heroic Gavaksha, Gavaya, Sushena, Rishabha, Jyotirmukha and Nala rushed towards Ravana with huge rocks in their hands. Ravana by his arrows frustrated the trees and stones of the Vanaras, and showered volleys of shafts over them. Then many of the huge Vanaras fell dead on the ground, while others dispersed in fear with their bleeding bodies and broken limbs. Many of them sought shelter with Rama. Then heroic Rama could no longer remain indifferent. He stood up with bow and arrows in hand.

Meanwhile, heroic Lakshmana approaching Rama with joined palms said, "Arya! I am alone sufficient to kill that villainous Ravana. Just command me and I shall destroy him."

Thereupon spirited Rama said, "Then go, my boy! and fight very cautiously against Ravana. He is mighty and wonderful in his prowess. Even the three worlds cannot stand his wrath.

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1 Kumara was the commander-in-chief of the gods, the son of Mahadeva.

At the time of fighting, keep your eyes always upon his weak spots as well as over your own. What shall I say more, you must always protect yourself with your eyes and bow."

Then heroic Lakshmana set forth for battle after greeting Rama with due honours.

Ravana standing at a short distance from the place, was spreading death and havoc amongst the Vanaras from his ponderous bow. At this, Hanuman ran towards his chariot and raising his right hand, as if to frighten him, said, "Thou villain! thou hast become invincible to the gods and the Gandharvas by the boon of Brahma, but hast reason to be afraid of the Vanaras. Now, I have raised my right hand with five fingers, I shall snatch away your old life from you."

Thereupon, mighty Ravana said, "You Vanara! Strike me without any fear, and be famous for it. I shall first test your prowess and shall kill you afterwards." Hanuman replied, "Just remember that I first sent your son Aksha to Death."

Ravana became greatly enraged at this and dealt a severe slap on Hanuman's breast. Hanuman reeled at that blow but recovering himself dealt a counter-slap to Ravana. Ravana at that blow trembled like a hill in an earthquake. The Vanaras and other sight-seers shouted in delight. Then Ravana after recovering a little, said, "Bravo! Bravo! you have sufficient strength and you are my worthy adversary." Hanuman said, O Rakshasa! it is indeed a

slur to my prowess that you are still alive after my slap. But you are bragging like a fool, just strike me once more and I shall send you to Death."

Ravana's eyes grew red with anger and he struck Hanuman with his fist on the chest. It was like a thunderbolt and Hanuman repeatedly fainted from that blow.

Then Ravana leaving Hanuman there, advanced towards Nila and wounded him with a deadly arrow.[1] Being smothered by that Nila hurled a huge stone against Ravana in one hand.

By that time Hanuman having recovered himself from that blow, got himself ready for the fight, and said, "Ravana ! it will be unfair to attack you when you are engaged in fighting with another."

Ravana cut Nila's rock with a sharp arrow. Thereupon, Nila flared up with rage and hurled Aswakarna, Shala, and Mango trees against him. Ravana cut them in pieces, and showered a volley of arrows upon the Vanaras.

In the meantime heroic Nila grew small and suddenly perched upon his flag-staff. Ravana burned with anger at this audacity of Nila. Then Nila began to spring from point to point. Ravana, Lakshmana and Hanuman were all struck with wonder at this astonishing feat of Nila. Ravana too was taken aback by this quickness of Nila, and he took up a flaming

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1 Almost everywhere the arrow has been compared to a dreadful snake.

fire-arm to kill him. The Vanaras chattered in delight at this discomfiture of Ravana. Ravana was greatly enraged at this, and holding the fire-arm in his hand, he was at a loss to decide what to do. Ravana casting his eyes repeatedly upon Nila perched on the flag-staff, said, "Vanara ! you have deluded me by your quickness, now save yourself if you can. You are assuming different forms just to save your life. I shall now discharge my fire-arm and this will surely put an end to your life." With these words, Ravana shot at the breast of Nila. Nila being struck by that fell on the ground, being scorched with fire. Due to his father's virtue and his own prowess his life was saved.

Then, Ravana seeing Nila lying unconscious proceeded in his deep rumbling car towards Lakshmana and getting near him he began to flourish his bow again and again. Then Lakshmana said, "Rakshasa king ! just fight with me, it is not worthy of a hero like you to fight with the Vanaras." Thus saying he twanged his bow.

Ravana hearing the twanging sound of Lakshmana's bow and his proud words, said, "For my good luck, you have come within my ken. You are a silly fool and you have to die in my hand."

Thereupon, Lakshmana said to grim Ravana, "O king ! the heroes never vaunt, why do you then brag foolishly ? I know your might and your valour. What is the good of idle

vauntings. Come, I am standing with my bow."

Then, Ravana discharged seven sharp arrows against Lakshmana. Lakshmana cut them in pieces by his sharp arrows. Ravana, seeing his own arrows cut in pieces like a chopped off snake, was greatly enraged and began to shower volleys of arrows upon Lakshmana. Lakshmana warded off his shafts by Khura, Ardhachandra and Bhalla weapons, and stood still in his place. Then Ravana was astonished seeing his arms thus being frustrated by Lakshmana, and began to shower sharp arrows again at him.

Lakshmana, in order to kill Ravana, hurled a fiery weapon against him. Ravana cut that in pieces, and struck Lakshmana on the forehead by a formidable weapon like doomsday-fire, granted by Brahma, the Lord of creation.

Lakshmana was sorely smitten by that blow and fell unconscious on the ground. Then on regaining consciousness he pierced Ravana with three arrows. Ravana too fainted from that blow. When he regained his senses, he was bathed in blood. In anger, Ravana took up the Sakti offered to him by Brahma. That Sakti was quite formidable for the Vanaras. Ravana hurled it against Lakshmana. Lakshmana seeing that flaming weapon coming with violent speed against him cut it in pieces by a fiery shaft. Still this violently struck against his broad chest. Lakshmana was mighty, but he fainted from that blow.

Ravana siezed unconscious Lakshmana in his mighty arms, but that hero, who could pluck the world with the Himalayas; Mandar and Sumeru could not raise him from the ground. At that time Lakshmana remembered that he was the unsevered part of Lord Vishnu. In fact, Ravana could not move him even an inch. Then Hanuman angrily struck Ravana with his fist on the chest. Ravana fainted on his chariot from that blow. He began to bleed profusely through his mouth, eyes and ears. He reeled under that blow and did not know where he was. The Vanaras then shouted in delight.

Then Hanuman took up wounded Lakshmana in two hands and brought him before Rama. Though Lakshmana was unmoveable by his enemies he became light on account of Hanuman's devotion and friendship. Ravana's Sakti at that time left Lakshmana and returned to its former place. Then Ravana after recovering his consciousness took up his bow and arrows. Lakshmana too was somewhat restored, as he was part of Vishnu. In the meantime, Rama finding a large number of Vanaras destroyed by Ravana, rushed towards him. Then heroic Hanuman approaching him said, "O hero! as Lord Vishnu riding on Garuda, the king of birds, slew the Asuras, the enemies of gods, likewise get upon my back and destroy Ravana this day."

Thereupon, Rama got upon Hanuman's back and rushed towards Ravana seated on his car.

It seemed as if enraged Vishnu was rushing against Vali, the Danava king.

Rama began to twang his bow and said, "Wait, Thou villain! how would you save yourself after inflicting such injuries on me? Even if you seek shelter with Indra, Yama, Surya, Brahma, Agni and Rudra, there is no escape from me. Thou hast struck Lakshmana with a Sakti, and I swear that I shall send you to Death with your family and children. I have slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas at Janasthana."

Thereupon, Ravana struck Hanuman, the carrier of Rama, with a dreadful arrow like doomsday fire. Hanuman's valour grew a hundredfold at that blow. Rama too grew angry seeing Hanuman thus struck with arrows, and instantly cut Ravana's chariot with its horses, wheels, umbrellas, flags and charioteer with sharp cutting arrows. As Indra struck the mount Sumeru with his thunderbolt, so he struck Ravana on his expansive breast with a formidable shaft. The great hero that even bore the thunderbolt of Indra became agitated and smothered with that blow. His bow fell from his hands. Then Rama cut his glittering crown with a sharp arrow. Rakshasa king Ravana then looked like the sun grown dim, or like a snake deprived of its venom.

Thereupon, Rama said, "Ravana, you have fought fiercely and a number of Vanaras have lost their lives in your hands. You are exhausted now, therefore, I refrain from destroying

you now. Now I ask you to withdraw immediately for rest. After that come back on your chariot with your warriors and witness my prowess."

Then Ravana having his pride thus humbled, entered Lanka with a sorrowful heart.

Rama too with the Vanaras brought round Lakshmana.

Then the Devas, Asuras, Goblins, Uragas, terrestrial and aerial beings clamoured in delight seeing Ravana thus worsted in fight.

CHAPTER XL

KUMBHAKARNA ROUSED FROM SLEEP

Rakshasa king, Ravana, had been humbled and sad. He had been defeated at the hands of Rama, as the elephant is vanquished by the lion, or as snakes by Garuda. Rama's arrows were dreadful like comets and blinding like the flash of thunder. Ravana was extremely grieved thinking of those arrows.

Then he addressing the Rakshasas from his golden seat said, "My counsellors! I am like Indra in prowess, but since I have been defeated by an ordinary man, all my austere devotion and penance seem to be futile. Formerly, Brahma told me that I would have occasion to fear man alone. Now his words have come to be true. I asked from Him the boon of being invincible to the Devas, Danavas, Gandharvas, Rakshasas and the Sarpas (snakes), but at that time I did

not even think of man. Now, it seems that man is Rama, the son of Dasaratha. Formerly, Anaranya, the Ikshvaku king, cursed me saying, "O thou, stain to your race! a hero will be born in my line, who will destroy you with your sons and friends." Formerly, once I used force against Vedavati, who too cursed me for being insulted by me. It now appears that that Vedavati has been born as Janaki. Moreover, Goddess Uma, Nandiswar, and Varuna's daughter Punjiksthali and Rambha cursed me in a like manner—I do now perceive consequence. In fact, the words of a Rishi never prove vain. O Rakshasas! now to overcome the present crisis, gather round the city-gates and ramparts. Heroic Kumbhakarna is now buried in deep sleep; just go and rouse him from that sleep. There is no limit to his prowess. He is the vanquisher of pride of the Danavas. He is lying unconscious in sleep on account of Brahma's curse. He has been sleeping for nine months. He is the greatest of the Rakshasas; that great hero will destroy Rama and Lakshmana with all the Vanaras. His prowess and valour in battle are well-known, but he is buried in a profound slumber. I have met with defeat at the hands of Rama. Now, if he is roused from sleep, the sorrow of my defeat will be removed. If he does not help me in my distress, of what use is he to me?"

Thereupon, the Rakshasas with various kinds of food and viands and scented garlands went to Kumbhakarna's abode. The place of Kumbhakarna was exceedingly beautiful and was a

yojana in length on each side. Its gate was spacious and the interior was filled with the fragrance of flowers.

Strong Rakshasas fell at a distance being thwarted by the force of his respiration, and with great difficulty they, then, entered the abode. The pavement of that chamber was made of gold. The Rakshasas on entering the room found Kumbhakarna huge as a mountain, lying stretched on his bed. Then the Rakshasas in a body tried to rouse him from sleep.

The hairs of Kumbhakarna's body were erect and bristle-like. He was breathing heavily like a serpent. The Rakshasas were whirled about by the wind of his breath as by a tornado. His nostrils were dreadful and his mouth as wide as the nether region. He was emitting an odour of fat and blood from his body. He wore a golden armour and his glittering diadem shone like the sun.

Then the Rakshasas placed meat and viands in huge heaps in front of him. Deer, buffaloes, boars were kept in great profusion, and jars of blood. Then they besmeared his body with excellent sandal and made him to sniff at the sweet fragrance of sandal and garlands. The perfume of incense filled every quarter. Many sang his praise, some roared like deep rumbling clouds, and some blew conch-shells, white as the moon. Many shouted in a body and began to brandish their arms. Then the birds flying under the sky being overpowered by that terrible noise fell on the ground. But still the deep

slumber of Kumbhakarna could not be disturbed. Then the Rakshasas began to strike him on the chest with clubs and maces. Some inflicted fist-blows. But they were unable to stand before Kumbhakarna on account of the violence of his breathing. The Rakshasas were ten thousand in number. They in a body resolved to rouse Kumbhakarna—dark as collyrium dye—from sleep. But being unsuccessful in their attempts, they exerted their utmost. They then began to goad elephants, camels, and to spur horses and asses to trample upon his body. They began to blow trumpets, conch-shells and Panavas and began to beat him with huge logs of wood and large clubs. That terrific din filled Lanka, but Kumbhakarna's sleep was not broken! Then the Rakshasas were enraged at their own failures. Some began to pull him by the hair, some bit his ears, and some threw water into his ear-holes, still Kumbhakarna lay inert in sleep. Many began to strike him with Sataghni. Ten thousand elephants began to trample upon him in great speed. From the trampling of the elephant he felt the sensation of pleasant touch and his sleep was broken. And being hungry, he rose from sleep and yawned repeatedly. That hero who was like a huge python by extending his mighty arms and opening wide his horse-like mouth, began to yawn. His face looked like the sun risen over the summit of the Sumeru hill. His breath blew like a heavy gale blowing among the hills. He stood up. He looked formidable like the Universal Dissolution that takes place at the end of each cycle of crea-

tion. His eyes were red like two pieces of burning coal and a fierce light were emitted from them like intense flashes of lightning. His two eyes looked like two shining planets.

Then the Rakshasas pointed out to Kumbhakarna the profusion of food and drink kept for him. He began to consume buffalo meat and ham and other flesh and being thirsty drank a large quantity ot blood. Then the Rakshasas finding Kumbhakarna fully gratified, slowly drew near him and they began to surround him on all sides after bowing profoundly to him. Kumbhakarna's eyes were still heavy with sleep and were half-opened in drowsiness. He cast his glance around him, and being surprised at this untimely awakening, addressing the Rakshasas he said, "O Rakshasas! tell me why you have thus roused me from sleep? Is not everything well with the Rakshasa king Ravana? Has he been afraid of some enemy? Whatever it might be, you have not roused me from my sleep for some insignificant cause. However, I shall remove all cause of fear. I shall cleave asunder the Mahendra hill and render fire cool. Now tell me why you have awakened me from my slumber?"

Thereupon, the counsellor, Yupaksha, said with joined palms, "O hero! we have nothing to fear from the gods, but man is the cause of our present troubles. We have been sorely disturbed by a man. In fact, the great fear that has been caused by a man could not be caused by the gods or the Asuras. Huge Vanaras have

now besieged Lanka on all sides. Rama has been extremely irritated by the abduction of Sita, and we have been greatly alarmed by his prowess. Before this only one Vanara came and burnt Lanka. Prince Aksha was slain by him. Rama through slight let Ravana, the enemy of the gods, escape. What could not be effected by the gods, Asuras and the Daityas has been accomplished by man! He let off Ravana to escape with his life."

Then Kumbhakarna, on hearing of the defeat of his brother Ravana, said with rolling eyes, "O counsellor! I shall first defeat Rama and Lakshmana with the Vanaras this day and then shall see the Rakshasa king. I shall this day entertain myself, with the flesh of the Vanaras and drink the blood of Rama and Lakshmana."

Then Mahodara said, "You should first hear Ravana, and decide upon your action after considering all pros and cons, and then fight with the enemies."

In the meantime the Rakshasas entered Ravana's palace and approaching him said, "Now your brother Kumbhakarna has risen from sleep. Will he set out for fight or do you wish him to come and see you here?" Ravana delightfully replied, "I want to see him here. Bring him with due honours."

The Rakshasas then repaired to Kumbhakarna and said, "The king desires to see you; please see him and enhance his delight."

Then Kumbhakarna left his bed, washed his face and took his bath. He then wished to take invigorating wine. The Rakshasas soon brought him wine and various kinds of eatables; Kumbhakarna drank two thousand jars of wine. On account of drink he appeared hot and flushed, and his strength increased a hundredfold. In his anger he looked like fierce Death and being surrounded by the Rakshasas he entered the palace of Ravana. The firm earth shook under his tread. He lighted the public roads by the effulgence of his body, as the sun lights up the world by his energy. On either side of him stood the Rakshasas with joined palms. It seemed, as if Brahma was proceeding towards the palace of Indra, the king of the gods.

At that time the Vanaras standing outside were alarmed by the sight of that mountain-like hero. Some of them sought protection under Rama, the giver of shelter to the refugees. Some of them fell on the ground from fear, and the great hero, Kumbhakarna, wore a crown on his head. The Vanaras seeing that huge hero of amazing appearance ran away in different directions.

CHAPTER XLI

KUMBHAKARNA'S FIGHT

At that time Rama began to survey Kumbhakarna with bow in his hand. That stalwart hero was proceeding along the sky like the god

Narayana about to put forth his third leg to cover the sky.[1] He was dark-skinned, like a rain cloud; his arms were protected with golden armours. Rama was greatly surprised at the sight of that great warrior and asked Vibhishana, "Who is that dark-skinned hero, with yellow eyes huge as a mountain? In the midst of Lanka with a diadem on his head he looks like lightning in the midst of clouds. This great hero seems to be the solitary flag-staff of the world. The Vanaras are running away in various directions. In fact, I have never seen such a creature. Now tell me who he is. Is he a Rakshasa or an Asura?"

Then, wise Vibhishana replied, "Rama! he is Kumbhakarna of a great prowess, the son of Viswasrava. In hugeness of body no other Rakshasa is equal to him. He has vanquished even Indra and Death in battle. He has conquered a large number of gods, Gandharvas, Vidyadharas and others. The gods took that grim-looking hero with lance in his hand for god Rudra, so they could not destroy him through their ignorance. Kumbhakarna is spirited by nature and the prowess of other Rakshasas has been obtained as boons, but it is different;

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1 The allusion to a foreigner might be unintelligible. The Asura king, Vali, who was famous for his unbounded charities gave away what one asked of him. God Vishnu to free the gods from Vali's yoke assumed the form of a Brahmin dwarf and approached Vali for alms. He asked Vali for three paces of ground. Vali readily assented to his humble prayer. Vishnu then covered the heavens and the earth by his two feet.

in his case. As soon as he was born he began to devour a number of creatures from hunger. At that, all the creatures were greatly alarmed for their lives and going to Indra informed him of the cause of their fear. Then Indra in rage hurled his thunder against this great hero. Being restive from that blow he began to cry in great pain. But all creatures grew alarmed at that cry. Then Kumbhakarna in great fury picked Airavata's tusk and struck Indra on the chest. Indra was greatly shaken by that blow and began to bleed from his body. The gods and the Rishis, all grew pale at that sight. Then Indra along with other creatures repaired to Brahma, the lord of creation, and told him about the destruction of the hermitages and abduction of people's wives by Kumbhakarna, and they submitted, "O Lord ! if Kumbhakarna devours creatures like this, creation will soon be denuded of created beings."

Hearing this from Indra's lips, Brahma, the Grandsire of creation, summoned the Rakshasas before him by chanting mantras. The Rakshasas soon appeared before him and amongst them was Kumbhakarna, and all that were present were greatly alarmed by his appearance. Then he said with some agitation, "O Rakshasa ! certainly, Viswasrava has created you for the desstruction of beings ; so you will lie buried in sleep like a dead person." Then Kumbhakarna being overpowered by the cause of Brahma fell asleep even in the presence of the latter.

Thereupon, Ravana with anxiety said, "O

Lord! the Kanchan tree has grown, why do you cut it down at the time of bearing fruits? Kumbhakarna is your grandson, and it is not proper for you to curse him thus. Your words will never prove false, so he will ever remain buried in sleep. But you will be pleased to fix a definite time for his sleep and for the time of his awakening."

Then Brahma said, "Ravana! this Kumbhakarna will remain asleep for six months and will be awake only for a day. This hero, on that day, will roam over the world with his mouth wide open with hunger and like burning fire will consume all beings. O Rama! Ravana has roused Kumbhakarna from fear. That hero issuing forth from his abode, is coming devouring fast the Vanaras in this way. The Vanaras are running away hither and thither at his very sight. In fact, it is impossible for the Vanaras to resist him. It is now desirable to announce among the Vanara army that it is no living being, but a machine has been set up. The Vanaras will then grow fearless."

Rama hearing these well-meaning words of Vibhishana, said to general Nila, "Go and wait with the army drawn in battle-array and collect stones and trees and block the gates, ways and the exits from the city."

Thereupon, Nila said to the Vanaras, "My soldiers! the Rakshasas, just to frighten us, have set up a machine. So don't be alarmed. After this great heroes as Gavaksha, Sarabha, Hanuman and Angada arrived at the city-gate

with stones and trees. The Vanara troops relying on Nila's words grew courageous and ready for battle. They looked like clouds hanging over the mountains.

CHAPTER XLII

MEETING WITH RAVANA

In the meantime, heroic Kumbhakarna, drowsy from sleep, was proceeding along the well-decorated public roads. The Rakshasas began to shower flowers on his head. A large number of Rakshasas were accompanying him. At a short distance, stood Ravana's palace, spacious, beautiful and adorned with golden nets. As the sun enters a bank of clouds, so heroic Kumbhakarna entered Ravana's residence and espied Ravana from a distance ; the earth shook under his mighty tread as he entered the hall. After crossing the threshold he found Ravana seated on the Pushpaka[1] with a sorrowful countenance.

Then Ravana, seeing Kumbhakarna, stood up from his seat and received him by advancing forward with delight. On Ravana's resuming his seat, Kumbhakarna after bowing down to his feet, asked, "What is the matter, my royal brother ?"

Thereupon, Ravana embraced Kumbhakarna in delight. And after being duly greeted by Ravana, Kumbhakarna took his seat and said, "Tell me, king ! why thou hast roused me from sleep, what cause of fear has arisen ? Who is to be destroyed at this moment ?"

1 It must be throne.

Ravana replied, "O hero! you were long buried in sleep, and so you could not know the cause of my fear. King Dasaratha's son, Rama, has entered Lanka after crossing the impassable ocean. He has bridged the sea and easily crossed the waters with his Vanara troops and has 'over-flooded' with his Vanaras the forests and gardens of Lanka. Now many leaders of the Rakshasas have been killed, but there has not been any great loss on the side of the antagonists. Not to speak of their losses, the Rakshasas could not defeat the Vanaras. O hero! now save us from the crisis. Go and kill the enemy. This is why I have roused you from your rest. My resources have almost been exhausted; you will find only the aged and the young surviving in Lanka; please protect them just out of pity. Undertake this arduous task and remove the sufferings and troubles of a brother. I have never requested you like this before. I have absolute confidence in your victory. In former times, at the time of war against the gods and the Asuras, you were the rival of the gods and inflicted signal defeat on them. Amongst the created beings there is none strong like you; please achieve my object by mustering all your strength. Disperse the enemy by your might as the wind scatters away the autumnal clouds. Now this is the work that is desirable, coveted and good for me."

Hearing these entreating words of Ravana, Kumbhakarna said with a smile:

"O king! what we apprehended at the time

of holding consultation with Vibhishana, has befallen you for neglecting our good counsel. As, in fact, the sinner is soon damned to perdition, so you have soon to reap the consequences of your wicked deed of abducting another's wife. Formerly, you did not, out of pride, calculate the evil consequences of this foul act; therefore this crisis has arisen. The king who performs late what is to be done early, and does that first what is to be performed last, is devoid of any sense of polity. His acts who has no regard for time and opportunity become futile as clarified butter offered into unsanctified[1] fire. The king who acts after consulting his ministers about five essential elements[2] in matters like peace and war is always in the right path. In truth, he attains success who understands everything by his intelligence and with the help of his counsellors, who examines carefully his friends and foes, and who follows religion, wealth and desire in due time.[3] But that king or prince who cannot decide what is best, or what to be preferred amongst these three, all his knowledge of Shastras is in vain. One who is intelligent, versed in polity, in economics and decide his course of action after consultation with his ministers, his fortune and prosperity remain

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1 Evidently it means not sacrificial fire.

2 Five elements: the ways and means for beginning an action, *i.e.*, Initiative, man-power, time and circumstances, prevention of difficulties and success.

3 Who knows when and how to attain wealth, to fu fil desire and to practise religion.

unshaken. One who is acquainted with the policy of equality, sowing dissensions amongst the enemy achieves success. There are some kings, however, who from their conceitedness argue without knowing the true import of the Shastras or of polity. One should not take him as his adviser who is not well-versed in politics and economics and who gives bad advice in the garb of a good counsel. Some advisers in order to ruin their master incite him to wicked deeds by their ill advice, and some join with the powerful enemies of his master. The king should discern and know such treacherous advisers. The king who is fickle and meddles in everything is doomed to ruin and his enemies always take advantage of his weakness, as the birds enter through the holes of the Krauncha hill. He who is indifferent about his own defence from a neglect of his enemy, meets with difficulties and soon loses his throne. O king! what queen Mandodari and brother Vibhishana have said formerly appear to me to be good and beneficial. Now, act in whatever manner you like."

Then Ravana grew angry at these words of Kumbhakarna and said with a frown, "Kumbhakarna! I am worthy of your respect like a preceptor and to be honoured as your superior. But, whereas you have the presumption to advise me, what is the good of your wasting so many words? Now, do what I have asked you to do. It is useless to repeat that which I have once declined to accede to. Now think what is best in the present situation and act accord-

ingly. If you have any love for your brother, or any prowess in you, or if you think it is your duty, to remove my sorrows and sufferings brought about by my bad policy, then do it. He is a friend indeed who stands by a distressed person, and who helps a man out of a difficulty."

Then Kumbhakarna finding his brother thus aggrieved, consoled him with sweet and cogent words. He said, "O king, just listen to my words. Be easy, banishing your anger and fear. Please do not express yourself as so very helpless so long as I am alive. I shall today kill him who is the cause of your fear. Now, whether you be in adversity or in prosperity, it is my duty to tell you as a friend and a brother what is good for you. I am willing to do what an affectionate friend is ready to do for his friend in distress. To speak the truth, the Vanaras finding Rama and Lakshmana dead, will run away in utter helplessness. You will be happy seeing Rama's head severed from his trunk by my hand and Janaki will be exceedingly sorry. The Rakshasas of Lanka have lost their friends and relations in battle and they will feel happy, seeing with their own eyes the destruction of Rama and Lakshmana this day. After destroying the enemy, I shall myself wipe their tears with my own hands. Today the huge body of Sugriva like a mountain will lie stretched like a cloud with the sun in it on the field of battle. O king! myself and other Rakshasas assure you again and again about the destruction of your enemy; then why do you not banish your

sorrow? Rama is an ordinary human being; he will have to kill me first and then he may do any injury to you. I have not the least fear of being slain by the hands of a man. Now, order me to proceed to the battle. What necessity is there of yourself meeting the enemy on the field of battle? I shall surely destroy the enemy even if he be highly powerful. I shall kill even Indra, Vayu, Kuvera and Yama if they be hostile to you. O king! when this stalwart warrior, with sharp teeth, will roam about the battle-field with a sharp lance in hand, who will be able to stand that sight? Even Indra will be frightened by my heroic roars at that time. Or when leaving aside my weapon, I shall smother the enemies by my bare arms only, who will then be able to stand before me without any risk to his life? I do not want any arms, I shall slay even Indra by the prowess of my arms, O king! To speak the truth, if Rama can survive this fist-blow, then surelv my arrows will drink his blood in no time. O king! why are you so anxious, when I am still alive? Banish your fear of Rama. I am going to destroy him now. I shall kill Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and that Hanuman who killed the Rakshasas formerly and put Lanka into flames. I shall devour the Vanaras in my hunger. If Indra or Brahma stand in your way to victory, still I shall secure victory and fame to you. In my anger even the gods will lie prostrate on the ground. I shall conquer death, shall devour fire, pull down the starry firmament with the sun to the ground, I shall kill Indra, drink the ocean, pound the

mountain and rend the earth into pieces. Living beings will witness today the strength of this Kumbhakarna ever buried in sleep. Even heaven is not enough to satisfy my hunger. My royal lord! I am now going to attain more and more happiness by destroying the enemy. Forget your sorrows in the company of bright women and drown your sorrows in drink. Just attend to your work. After Rama is slain this day, Janaki will ever be obedient to you."

CHAPTER XLIII

MAHODARA'S SPEECH

Then Mahodara addressing Kumbhakarna said, "You are, no doubt, born in a noble line, but you are most ugly and very haughty and you cannot understand anything subtle, nor can you fully judge a thing. It is absurd to hold that the Rakshasa king is incapable of judging of what is good or evil, but you are saucy and garrulous from your very infancy, therefore you have wasted your breath by talking useless things. The Rakshasa king has full knowledge of time and circumstances. He knows fully how to improve his own position and to render the position of his adversary worse, and knows how to keep himself in a position when there is no chance of gain to him, nor that of any loss to the enemy. What wise king will perform that thing about which even those who do not honour the wise and the aged, and

whose intellect is weak and who chiefly rely on their physical strength, waver? And you are incapable of comprehending antagonistic virtues, fully. You see, action is the source of all virtue, wealth and desire. Who has no activity, has no energy or valour. It is he who acts suffers or enjoys the bad or good consequences of his act. The end of virtue and wealth is the attainment of salvation, and by some special acts one may attain heaven and success. He who does not practise virtue or neglects the attainment of riches[1] commits sin, but who slights his desires does not commit any wrong. The fruits of righteous acts and of wealth occur either in this world or in the next, but the good consequences of following one's desire take place immediately.[2] So a king should satisfy his desire. And to speak the truth, we heartily approve of the action of our royal master, of course there is no harm in meeting an enemy bravely, but your proposal of going to the battle-field singly is improper and I shall presently show you the reasons for it. How can you hope to conquer single-handed the man who has killed a number of Rakshasas at

1 Perhaps it means all that contribute to the material prosperity and happiness of the person and his community.

2 The passage is rather difficult. It seems what Mahodara means is this: Virtue may not be rewarded in this world, one's endeavours for prosperity may not be immediately crowned with success, but the attainment of the objects of common desire may be immediate.

Janasthan ? Don't you find the Rakshasas too much alarmed who had suffered defeat at Janasthan ? Knowing heroic Rama to be as formidable as a dreadful snake or burning flame, how do you dare to provoke him ? Rama is quite irresistible and formidable ; who would dare to face him without any fear of death ? It seems to me that the whole army will be in danger. So you should not go alone. What fool thinks of subduing an undaunted enemy at ease, who has a strong following ? How dare you fight[1] Rama like whom there is no warrior amongst men and who is mighty as Indra himself ?"

Mahodara then turning towards Ravana said, "O king, why are you vainly waiting after securing Janaki ? Janaki will just now obey your will if you so desire. In this matter I have hit upon a device. Just listen to me and think over it and if it meets with your approval you may adopt the same. My proposal is this. First it should be announced everywhere that Kumbhakarna. Dvijihva, Samhradi,Vitaraddana and myself have set forth to destroy Rama in battle. We shall fight valiantly against Rama ; if we win there will be need of that devise ; but in case we be defeated, then you should do what I now advise you to do. We shall come back from the battle-field with wounds received from

1 It is quite unnatural that a strong supporter of Ravana will speak in eulogistic terms of Rama, but here the Versifier (certainly not the great Valmiki) could not resist the temptation of introducing much repeated things about Rama.

arrows inscribed with the name of Rama and shall give out that we have devoured Rama and Lakshmana and then shall ask for our reward from you. In the meantime have this news of Rama and Lakshmana's death spread through your spy, Gajaskandha. Then you will distribute riches, apparel, garlands, servants, maids and other things as if you have been mightily pleased with the heroes returned from battle and you will begin to drink in joy. Thus after the news of Rama's death being circulated all over, you should go to the Asoka garden and should console Sita in seclusion and tempt her with the offering of riches. If Janaki be thus deceived by this demonstration of sorrow, she will obey your will. Knowing her beautiful husband to be dead, out of despair and out of frailties common to all women, she will yield to you.

"Formerly she was brought up in great happiness, now she has been smitten with sorrow, so now finding that happiness is within your reach she will yield to you, O king, to me it seems to be the best way of attaining your happiness. But obstacles will impede as soon as she will see Rama. So you should not be anxious for battle. It is not possible to secure that amount of happiness in battle as it is possible to attain here. O king! without incurring any risk of life and without any loss of army score a victory over your enemy that will enable you to attain fame and prosperity."

Then heroic Kumbhakarna said to Ravana,

"O *king! I shall remove thy fears by slaying* that wicked Rama this day. Be thou happy, free from any fear of the enemy. A true hero never boasts in vain like an empty autumnal cloud. In battle-field I shall execute my bragging words."

Then Kumbhakarna addressing heroic Mahodara said, "Thou coward! what thou hast said may be agreeable to weak and conceited princes. You are afraid of battle; therefore, it is your duty to please your master by flattery. In fact, you have spoilt everything by your faults. What miseries have befallen Lanka, it is denuded of troops and its treasury is empty, and only the king remains. To speak the truth, you have acted like enemies in the garb of friends. After this I shall immediately set forth for fighting to undo the mischiefs produced by your evil policy."

Thereupon Ravana smilingly said to Kumbhakarna, "This Mahodara has been greatly frightened by the prowess of Rama; therefore he is not much in favour of war. O hero! there is none like you in love and friendship towards me. Now proceed to win victory. You see, I have roused you from sleep just to destroy the enemy. In fact this is a crisis for the Rakshasas. Now set forth holding a lance in your arm like Death with his noose and devour Rama and Lakshmana with the army. The Vanaras will run away in different directions at the very sight of you and the hearts of Rama and Lakshmana will rend in sorrow."

With these words, Ravana became confident

as if his sorrows were at an end, and he seemed to get a life. On account of that his face in delight grew beautiful like the full moon. Then Kumbhakarna got ready for the battle. He took up a sharp steel lance wrought in gold. That lance adorned with a garland of scarlet flowers looked like a veritable thunderbolt. It was emitting sparks incessantly. Kumbhakarna snatching up with force the huge lance, stained with blood of the enemies and that was the destroyer of the gods and the Asuras, said, "O king, what need have I of any army ? I shall go alone in the battle-field and devour the Vanaras to appease my hunger." Then Ravana said, "O hero ! the Vanaras are powerful and skilled in battle. Finding you alone they might kill you by their bitings. So you proceed being surrounded by troops armed with maces and lances and come back victorious by destroying the enemies of the rovers of night."

Then Ravana descending from the throne put on Kumbhakarna's neck a golden necklace adorned with gems, bright as the moonbeam. Then after putting armour, gloves, and other excellent ornaments in their right places Ravana fixed ear-ring to Kumbhakarna's ears and a superbly fragrant garland on his neck. At that time, that large-eared warrior being thus adorned, looked like sacrificial fire. His waist was tied up with a dark-red girdle, and it seemed as if the Mandara mountain had been fastened round by snakes at the time of churning the ocean. He then put on golden armour glitter-

ing like the lightning. He was impregnable on account of that armour and he looked wonderful like the Himalaya mountain tinged with the evening rays. When thus equipped, he stood up with a lance in his hand and looked like Narayana ready to overcome the three worlds by his three footsteps.

Then that mighty Rakshasa hero got ready for departure after embracing, greeting and wheeling round Ravana. Ravana blessed him. At that time conch-shells and trumpets began to be blown. Horses, elephants, chariots, and armed troops followed him. Rakshasas riding on snakes, camels, asses, lions, elephants, deer and birds followed him in numbers. A beautiful umbrella was held over Kumbhakarna's head and when he started for battle the Rakshasas showered flowers on his head. A large infantry followed him, they were grim-visaged and highly powerful. They were athletic, tall and dark as collyrium dye, and their eyes were red. They carried in their hands sharp swords, lances, axes, bhindipalas, maces and parighas. Heroic Kumbhakarna being followed by that formidable infantry issued forth like Death. That crooked warrior, drawing the army in battle array, said with a cruel laugh, "You see, as fire burns moths and flies, I shall burn with the fire of my rage the leading Vanaras this day. Nay, what is their fault? These denizens of this forest are innocent. Rama is the cause of this siege of Lanka, so I shall kill him first."

Thus encouraging the troops, Kumbhakarna

disturbed the sea by his heroic roars. At that time, dreadful omens were seen on all sides. The earth shook with its seas and forests, the sun grew dark, the vulture perched on the flag-staff and jackals began to howl. At last the Vanaras espied him like god Rudra on the field of battle and ran away in fear and many of them stumbled on the ground like uprooted Sala trees.

CHAPTER XLIV

KUMBHAKARNA'S FIGHT

Then Kumbhakarna began to roar in battle-delight, that resounded like thunderclaps. The Vanaras ran away in fear at his very sight.

Then Angada seeing the Vanara troops thus frightened, addressing Nila, Nala, Kumuda and Gavaksha, said, "O heroes! where are you fleeing away like ordinary Vanaras, forgetting your rank and birth? Turn back. What is the good of saving one's life thus? What you see there, is only a dreadful illusion. We shall destroy that illusion by our prowess. Come back."

The Vanaras were thus somewhat encouraged and they returned to the battle-field with trees and stones and began to hurl them against Kumbhakarna in great anger. But huge trees and stones crumbled into pieces being dashed against his adamantine body. Then Kumbha-

karna began to smother the Vanaras as fire reduces the woods into ashes. Many Vanaras fell on the ground like Kinsuka trees, crimsoned with blood, many fell into the sea, many ran into forest and many ran over the bridge. At that moment, they had no courage or time to look forward or backward ; every one's face was pale with fear. The Bhallukas hid themselves amongst the trees and hills and some fell on the ground as dead and some ran away. Thereupon heroic Angada said, "O Vanaras! be partient, we shall fight boldly. Though you are running away, I do not see any refuge for you in the three worlds. Now, turn back. Why are you so anxious to save your lives? If you return being vanquished, your wives will laugh at you ; that laugh of scorn will be worse than death to a man of honour. You are born of a noble and mighty race; now whither do you run away being thus frightened ? Why are you running away without displaying your valour? Surely you are low. Whither has gone your prowess of which you boasted so much to help your master therewith ?"

Being encouraged by Kumbhakarna's words the Rakshasas set up a heroic roar that seemed to agitate the ocean. At that time various evil portents became visible. The clouds turned gray as asses, and there were showers of burning meteors and thunder and lightning shook the earth. Jackals bagan to howl fearfully, and birds in a circle began to fly on the left. A vulture perched upon Kumbhakarna's lance. His left eye and left arm began to throb. The

sun grew dim and the pleasant breeze ceased to blow. Kumbhakarna was blinded by his fate, and so he did not notice these bloodcurdling omens. Then the mountain-like huge hero crossed the moat in a stride and appeared before the Vanara army, the Vanaras ran away in different directions at the sight of him. They stumbled on the ground like felled trees from fear. Kumbhakarna's hand was like a formidable bolt. In the field of battle, he, for the destruction of his enemies, appeared like god Rudra at the time of universal destruction with the mace of Death in his hand.

CHAPTER XLV

KUMBHAKARNA'S FIGHT

The Vanaras unable to stand before Kumbhakarna ran away in fear of their lives. Angada after taking them to task for their cowardly conduct, said :

"Either we shall die and reach the region of the blessed, unattainable by the weak and the coward, and enjoy all the luxuries in the abode of the heroes[1] after death or by our victory we shall achieve imperishable fame on earth.

1 Amongst the Greeks also there was a belief in the existence of a happy isle where the heroes, dying in battle, repaired after death, where Ulysses met with Achilles in his voyage to his native home.—Ithaca.

"We are recognised as heroes by the warriors ! if we run away for fear of life, then this scandal will be known all over, that thousands ran away in fear of one."

Thereupon, the Vanaras, while running away, replied in words unworthy of heroic souls, "O prince ! Kumbhakarna is fighting tremendously, none can stand him in the battle-field. Life is dear to us."

With these words the Vanara troops took to their heels. But Angada after assuring them again and again and holding before them hopes of victory, rallied them round with great difficulty.

The Vanaras then grew calm, and returned to the field of battle. They were delighted with the assurance of Angada and commenced a fierce fight with Kumbhakarna, and many advanced with trees and stones against Kumbhakarna. Kumbhakarna too being greatly enraged at this began to kill them. And within a short time a number of Vanaras lay dead on the field. As Garuda, the king of birds, devour the snakes, so Kumbhakarna began to devour the Vanaras siezing them by force.

In the meantime, Dwivida rushed forward with a stone and hurled it with great violence on Kumbhakarna. But that stone missed Kumbhakarna and fell amongst the troops. It crushed many warriors, elephants and chariots. Thereupon the formidable Kumbhakarna with a tremendous yell began to kill the Vanaras with sharp arrows. Then Dwivida hurled

another stone in the midst of the army. It killed a fresh number of troops, elephants and chariots.

In the meantime, Hanuman got upon the sky and began to hurl stones and trees upon Kumbhakarna's head. Kumbhakarna cut those trees and stones in pieces with his lance, and he advanced towards the Vanaras with his lance in his hand. At that, Hanuman struck Kumbhakarna with a peak. B'ood flowed in stream from his body and he was stunned by that blow. Then that great hero, like luminous mountain, pierced Hanuman's breast with his sharp flaming lance. Hanuman was stunned by that blow and began to vomit blood with a groan. Thereupon the Rakshasas began to roar in delight.

Then Nila after assuring and rallying the Vanara troops, hurled a huge stone against Kumbhakarna, but that was crushed to pieces by Kumbhakarna's first blow and fell on the ground with sparks.

In the meantime, Rishabha, Sarabha, Nila, Gavaksha, Gandhamadana,—these five heroes rushed against Kumbhakarna and began to assault him ; some kicked at him ; some slapped and some fisted him but instead of feeling any pain, Kumbhakarna rather felt a pleasing sensation from that beating. Then Kumbhakarna caught Rishabha by his hand and pressed him hard. Rishabha fell senseless on the ground with crimsoned face and Kumbhakarna then kicked at Gavaksha, slapped Nila, and fisted

Sarabha. They began to bleed from their bodies and fell down on the ground like Kinsuka trees cut down. Then thousands of Vanaras rushed against Kumbhakarna and jumped over his body and began to bite again and again, and showered on him fist-blows. Then Kumbhakarna with the Vanaras over his body appeared like a hill with trees grown over it, began to devour the Vanaras. The Vanaras being cast into his wide mouth—like the bottomless pit—came out through his ears and nostrils. Then Kumbhakarna in anger began to tear them off to pieces. And in no time the battle-field became gory with fat and blood. Kumbhakarna roamed amongst the Vanara troops spreading havoc like the doomsday-fire. He with his lance looked like Indra with his thunderbolt and Death with his noose. And he began to smother the Vanaras, as fire burns down dry woods in summer. Then the Vanaras began to groan hideously, and took shelter with Rama.

In the meantime, heroic Angada rushed towards Kumbhakarna with a huge rock and by frightening the Rakshasas by his heroic roars, he hurled it on the head of Kumbhakarna. Thereupon Kumbhakarna's wrath was kindled like fire and he rushed towards Angada putting the Vanaras into flight by his heroic roar and hurled his lance against him. Then skilful warrior Angada, quickly changed his position and Kumbhakarna's lance became frustrated. Then Angada by a mighty spring slapped Kumbhakarna on the chest. Kumbhakarna was

stunned, and then recovering himself dealt a fist-blow on Angada. Angada fell senseless by that blow.

After that Kumbhakarna proceeded towards Sugriva with a lance in his hand. Sugriva too, seeing Kumbhakarna coming near him, sprang up and took up a huge rock and advanced forward to meet his adversary. Thereupon, Kumbhakarna stood before him outstretching his arms. Kumbhakarna was all over besmeared with Vanara blood. At that Sugriva said, "O Rakshasa! many warriors have met with their death at your hands. You have achieved a very arduous task. Certainly, your fame will be greatly enhanced. Now leave the Vanara soldiers. What good will you reap by slaughtering the insignificant ones? Now do I hurl this rock against you. Resist it if you can."

Then Kumbhakarna said, "O Vanara! You are the grandson of Prajapati, and the son of the Riksha king. You have both valour and fortitude! therefore dost thou brag so much."

Then Sugriva hurled that adamantine rock and struck Kumbhakarna on the breast. But that rock crumbled into pieces by coming in contact with his expansive chest. At that the Vanaras were greatly mortified, and the Rakshasas began to shout in delight. Kumbhakarna was highly enraged and threw his glittering lance like lightning against Sugriva, by opening wide his mouth. In the meantime, Hanuman sprang up, seized the lance with its golden

chain and broke it in pieces. He easily broke the steel lance by bending it over his knees. The Vanaras were greatly delighted at that. The Rakshasas desisted from the battle in fear. Thereupon, Kumbhakarna broke down a peak of the Malaya mountain and hurled it against Sugriva. Sugriva fainted from that blow. The Rakshasas shouted in joy. In the meantime, Kumbhakarna took away heroic Sugriva as the wind takes away the cloud. Kumbhakarna with Sugriva in his hands looked like the Sumeru hill with lofty peaks. The gods were greatly astonished at this and created a great noise by their clamour. Kumbhakarna repaired with Sugriva in the midst of the praises of the Rakshasas and the noise of the denizens of the heaven. The Vanaras being too much frightened left the field in a hurry. Thus taking away Sugriva, Kumbhakarna thought that with the destruction of Sugriva everything of Rama would be destroyed.

Seeing all these, intelligent Hanuman thought, "Sugriva has been captured ; what shall I do now ? I shall do what is proper. I shall now slay Kumbhakarna. If Kumbhakarna dies of fist-blow, then Sugriva will be released and everybody will be glad. But what is the necessity of doing such a thing ? If Sugriva falls in the hands of the gods and the Asuras, he will free himself by his own valour. Perhaps he is now unconscious on account of the blow received ; therefore he cannot realise his situation. He will soon regain his consciousness and do what is good for himself and for the

Vanaras at large. But if I rescue him, he won't be pleased with that ; moreover there will ever be a stigma to his name ; so let me wait for a short time ; he will himself free himself from Kumbhakarna's grasp and prove his prowess thereby." Having decided in this manner, Hanuman began to encourage the Vanaras by his assuring words.

In the meantime, Kumbhakarna entered Lanka with Sugriva, whose life was pulsating in his veins. All were struck with wonder by that sight and began to shower flowers on his head. Then Sugriva slowly began to revive in the cool breeze that blew along the highways of Lanka and with the sweet smell of fried rice and spray of water that was sprinkled upon Kumbhakarna's head as Sugriva was within the clutch of Kumbhakarna's arms. He slowly opened his eyes and saw the public roads of Lanka. Thus finding himself within the grasp of his adversary, Sugriva began to devise what he was to do. What steps he would take that might be good both for himself and the Vanaras.

Thus thinking, Sugriva, all on a sudden, tore Kumbhakarna's ears with his nails, bit off Kumbhakarna's nose with his sharp teeth, and tore Kumbhakarna's sides by kicking simultaneously with his two legs. Kumbhakarna began to bleed profusely. He threw down Sugriva in anger and began to strike him with all his might. The Rakshasas began to beat him right and left. But all on a sudden Sugriva sprang up like a ball and ran to Rama.

Kumbhakarna with his torn ears and nose began to bleed, as fountains and brooks run in a hill, and his collyrium black colour being gory with blood, he appeared like an evening cloud tinged with the crimson rays of the setting sun. Then, that big warrior again resolved to fight, and finding no other weapon took a huge club and appeared again on the field of battle. In his wrath he began to devour the Vanara troops, emerging from the city of Lanka. In his hunger and fury he began to devour two or three Vanaras at a time. He could not even distinguish the Rakshasas at that time, and devoured a good many of them. He seized the Vanaras and the Rakshasas by his hands and threw them into his mouth. Blood and fat trickled down his elbows. Then the Vanaras ran away in great fear and took shelter under Rama.

In the meantime, heroic Lakshmana commenced a great fight. He pierced Kumbhakarna first with seven arrows and then with a number of shafts. Kumbhakarna broke these arrows in pieces. At that Lakshmana grew enraged and pierced Kumbhakarna's golden armour with a volley of arrows. Dark-skinned Kumbhakarna with the arrows, then appeared like the sun surrounded by the clouds. Then in a thundering voice addressing Lakshmana, Kumbhakarna said, "O hero! I have vanquished even Death, but since you have thus ventured to fight against me, you will surely be famous for this. Not to speak of fighting, that you have succeeded in standing before me for so long, is

enough glory for you. Formerly even Indra mounted upon his Airavata and with his hosts of gods could not do that. Lakshmana! you are still a boy, and I have been greatly pleased with your valour. Now, allow me to go to Rama for battle. You see, it is my object to kill Rama and with his destruction everything will be over. What else may remain I shall destroy hereafter."

Lakshmana replied with a (contemptuous) laugh, "O Rakshasa! I do not dispute your prowess that even the gods could not resist. Now, look there stands Rama firm as a rock."

Thereupon, Kumbhakarna leaving aside Lakshmana proceeded towards Rama, shaking the earth by his heroic tread. Then Rama struck him on the heart with a severe shaft. Being thus struck by Rama's arrow, Kumbhakarna with a terrific yell pressed forward towards Rama. In Kumbhakarna's anger fire with cinders began to come out from his mouth. At that time, his club slipped from his hand and being deprived of all weapons he began to fight with his fist and palm. Being wounded by Rama's arrows he began to bleed in torrents. He was beside himself with rage and fury and began to devour the Vanaras and the Bhallukas and, brandishing a huge rock in his hand he advanced towards Rama. Kumbhakarna hurled that rock in great violence against Rama. Rama cut that in pieces by seven gold-plated arrows. That rock fell on the ground and crushed two hundred Vanaras to death.

In the meantime, heroic Lakshmana often thinking of hundreds of ways of slaying Kumbhakarna, addressing Rama said, "O worshipful lord! this warrior being maddened by the smell of blood has lost his judgment of distinguishing friends from foes. So he is devouring the Vanaras and the Rakshasas alike. Now let the Vanaras get upon him and the Vanara leaders surround him on all sides. If this villain is weighed down with heavy weight, then he won't devour any more while coming forward to fight.

Thereupon, the Vanaras being delighted with Lakshmana's words, got upon Kumbhakarna who was greatly enraged at this and began to shake them off from his body, as a vicious elephant shakes off its rider by shaking his back.

Thereupon, Rama took up his bow in anger and he stared at Kumbhakarna as it to scorch him with the fire of his wrath. Rama then advanced towards him. At the sight of that the Vanaras smothered by Kumbhakarna grew courageous.

Rama held in his hand a golden bow like a formidable snake and from his shoulder slung a quiver full of arrows.

Assuring the Vanaras, Rama hurried towards Kumbhakarna. Formidable Vanaras surrounded Rama. And Lakshmana following his brother's step, found Kumbhakarna with red-hot eyes, a crown on his head and blood streaming from his body. Kumbhakarna like an enraged elephant that guards one of the quarters of the

globe, rushed towards everybody. He was tall like the Vindhya and the Mandar hill and blood streamed from his mouth, as rains from the clouds. He was licking his elbows drenched with blood. He was emitting a fierce effulgence like fire and could not be stared at.

Rama seeing that warrior grim as Death, twanged his bow. Kumbhakarna unable to bear that sound rushed forward towards Rama in great wrath.

Seeing Kumbhakarna, heroic Rama with arms long like the body of a snake, said, "O Rakshasa chief! here am I standing, Rama the destroyer of the Rakshasa race, with bow and arrows in my hand; come, don't be sorry,—you will soon meet with your end at my hands."

Thereupon Kumbhakarna hearing the name of Rama, burst forth in a sardonic laughter and rushed towards him by trampling over the Vanaras. Then that heroic Kumbhakarna said in a thundering voice, that struck terror into the hearts of the Vanaras, "Rama! I am neither Viradha, nor Khara, nor Kavanda, nor Vali, nor Maricha, but Kumbhakarna himself. Just look at my iron-club, with this I formerly conquered the gods and Asuras. Though my ears and nose are torn, still do not slight me. Now first display your prowess to me. I shall witness that first, and devour you afterwards."

Thereupon, heroic Rama being greatly enraged with Kumbhakarna's words, shot arrows

against him. But Kumbhakarna was not a bit pained by it. The arrow that could penetrate seven palms at a time, and which slew a great hero like Vali, fell flat on Kumbhakarna. That blood-stained warrior easily bore Rama's shafts as showers of rain on his body. Then he violently whirled his formidable club by which he thwarted the arrows hurled against him and kicked a large number of Vanaras. Then heroic Rama fixed a Vayavya[1] arrow to his bow and discharged it against Kumbhakarna. The weapon, as soon as it was discharged, tore off Kumbhakarna's hand with the club. Kumbhakarna cried hideously in pain and that huge hand like a (broken) cliff crushed many Vanaras to death. Then the surviving Vanaras looked (wistfully) at the fighting between Kumbhakarna and Rama. Kumbhakarna with his severed arm looked like a hill deprived of its peak. In the meantime, Kumbhakarna uprooted a big Sala tree in one hand and rushed with that against Rama. Rama cut off that hand with an Aindra[2] weapon. That severed hand fell like an inert mass on the ground and it crushed Vanaras, trees and rocks by its weight.

Then Kumbhakarna with a terrible yell rushed towards Rama. Rama cut off his two legs with two sharp crescent-shaped weapons. The legs fell on the ground with a terrific crashing sound filling all quarters with it. Being thus

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1 The word means pertaining to the wind.

2 It means appertaining to Indra.

deprived of his arms and legs, Kumbhakarna by gaping wide his horse-like mouth, rushed towards Rama. At this, heroic Rama filled the cavity of his mouth with arrows. Kumbhakarna's mouth was gagged and he lost his speech. He then fainted with a painful groan. Then Rama took up a dazzling Aindra weapon irresistible like death and hurled it in great speed like a thunder against Kumbhakarna. That Aindra weapon, like smokeless fire, flew fast along the sky and lighted up the whole horizon with its own effulgence and cut Kumbhakarna's huge head adorned with ear-rings. When the head of that hero fell, it crushed the city-wall, city-gates and edifices. Kumbhakarna's huge body by the force of the momentum fell into the sea. It reached the bottom of the ocean by crushing fishes and crocodiles by its weight. When that hero, the enemy of the gods and the Brahmins, was thus destroyed the earth with hills and forests and the gods made a confused noise in delight. Devarshis, Maharshis, Pannagas, Guhykaas, Yakshas, Gandharvas and Pakshis, all in wonder looked at the heroic feat of Rama.

Then the Rakshasas were struck with panic at this death of Kumbhakarna and ran away and began to shriek in fear at the sight of Rama, as the elephants move away at the sight of a lion. As the sun being freed from the grip of Rahu after the eclipse, shines in its splendour, by destroying all darkness by its rays, so Rama shone forth in all his effulgence amongst the Vanaras. Then their faces beamed in delight like lotuses (of the morning) and greeted Rama

again and again in gratefulness. Kumbhakarna hitherto never met with any defeat in battle. He vanquished the heavenly hosts by his powers. And as Indra, the king of the gods, slew Vritrasura, so Rama destroyed Kumbhakarna in fight and delighted at his death.

CHAPTER XLVI

THE SAD NEWS

The Rakshasas seeing Kumbhakarna thus slain by Rama, hastened to Ravana, and said, "O king! that great Kumbhakarna, after destroying the Vanaras, has met with his own death. He smothered them for sometime, but was at last, rendered inert by Rama. His headless trunk obstructed the gateway of Lanka. His ears and nose were torn, his hands and legs were cut off and he has been destroyed like big tree consumed by the forest-fire. His blood-stained body is half-immersed in the water of the sea."

Then the Rakshasa king, Ravana, was smitten with grief and he fainted from intense sorrow at the news of Kumbhakarna's death. Devantaka, Narantaka and Trishira cried at the death of their uncle. Mahodara and Mahaparshwa shed tears at the news of their step-brother's death.

Then Ravana after regaining consciousness began to lament in bitter sorrow, "Alas, Kumbhakarna, subduer of enemy's pride, why hast

thou forsaken me so suddenly ? Whither hast thou gone without removing my sorrows and the affliction of my relations. I am no longer alive, it seems. How could Rama slay that hero who humbled the Asuras and who was like the doomsday-fire ? Upon his body thunder could not produce any impression ; how could he be destroyed by Rama's arrows ? The Vanaras are now shouting for joy at your death. The Vanaras, now, thinking of this opportunity will infest Lanka and besiege the inaccessible gateways of the city. I have no more need for kingdom, nor any desire for Janaki. What shall I do with Janaki ? When Kumbhakarna is dead, what is the use of living any more ? If I cannot slay Rama, the destroyer of my brother it is better to die. Today I shall repair where Kumbhakarna has gone. I do not wish to live even for a moment in absence of my brother. I injured the gods before now : they will surely laugh at me (at my miseries). Alas, Kumbhakarna ! thou art dear. How shall I vanquish Indra without your help ? Formerly, I slighted Vibhishana's words out of ingnorance : now do I suffer for it. Since I have heard of Prashasta's and Kumbhakarna's death, the words of Vibhishana have been tormenting me with remorse and shame. I am now reaping the consequence of turning away virtuous Vibhishana. This is the sad result of my own misdeeds."

Then the Rakshasa king with a grief-laden heart began to lament bitterly and at last fainted from too much sorrow.

Then Trisira finding the Rakshasa king thus overwhelmed with sorrow, said, "O king! though our uncle, the great hero Kumbhakarna, is dead, still a great hero like you should never lament like this. Your prowess is capable of conquering the three worlds: then why do you lament like a weak person? You have Sakti given by Brahma. You have impenetrable armour, a splendid bow and arrows and chariot yoked with thousands of asses, that produce a deep rumbling noise like a cloud. By your arms, you have repeatedly conquered the Suras and the Asuras; now it is necessary for you to punish Rama. Rather, you remain here, let me go to the battle and I shall destroy your enemy as Garuda, the king of birds, destroyed the snakes. As Samvarasura was slain by Indra, Narakasura by Vishnu, so Rama will lie prostrate on the battlefield, being slain by me."

Then Ravana, whose end was near, revived in delight, as if he got a new lease of life, from Trisira's words. Devantaka, Narantaka and Atikaya became buoyed up with joy at the prospect of battle, and in their enthusiasm they clamoured saying, "Let me go first, let me proceed first."

They began to roar in war-delight. Those warriors were versed in black art, were capable of journeying through the sky and were the vanquishers of gods and Asuras. They were great heroes, and their fame spread everywhere. Nothing was ever heard about their defeat amongst the gods, Gandharvas, Kinnaras and

the Uragas.[1] They were proud of their own valour, they were versed in all kinds of learning, they were skilled in battle and possessed great knowledge of science. Ravana being surrounded by those valiant sons, looked like Indra, the king of heaven, surrounded by gods, the vanquishers of the Asuras. He embraced them repeatedly and having commissioned Mahaparshwa and Mahodara for their protection, blessed them for achieving victory.

Then those mighty heroes, being equipped with war-like things bowed to Ravana and set forth for battle.

Mahodara, with a quiverful of arrows got upon a cloud-like elephant (descended from the family of Airavata) and thereby he looked like the setting sun (in the midst of the evening clouds). Prince Trisira got upon a chariot full of arms and he appeared like a threatening cloud with lightning, or like a formidable comet. He, in his triple crown looked like the Himalayas with its three golden peaks. Heroic Atikaya was another son of Ravana. Having been thoroughly equipped for fighting he got upon an excellent car. It was very nicely built and weapons were stored in it. Atikaya had a golden crown on his head, and excellent ornaments on his body. He then shone like the southern mountain in the morning rays. Being surrounded

1 Uragas means serpents, perhaps a sect of aborigines whose national emblem was the snake. Or it might be their totem.

by the Rakshasa warriors, he looked like Indra encircled by the gods.

Then Narantaka mounted upon a golden steed, like the heavenly horse Uchchaihsrava, that was in fleetness like the wind, or like the flight of thought. He carried only one weapon in his hand, a meteor-like glittering Prasa. Heroic Devantaka took a huge Parigha wrought in gold, and he looked like god Vishnu with the Mandara mountain at the time of churning the ocean. The great warrior Mahaparshwa, took a formidable club and looked like god Kuvera, the lord of wealth.

Thus all these heroes issued forth from Lanka like gods from the heavenly city of Amaravati. A large number of Rakshasas followed them on horseback, elephants and chariots. At that time, those bright princes looked like luminous planets in the sky. Their upraised arms against the sky looked like a flock of cranes white as the autumnal clouds. They set forth in great speed with the fixed determination either to conquer the enemy or to embrace death in battle. Some of them roared in battle-delight, some brandished their arms against their opponents The sky seemed to be rent with their war-cries.

On coming forward, the Rakshasas found the Vanaras standing ready with trees and stones in their hands. The Vanaras too marked the Rakshasas' advance. That vast army with jingling sounds, composed of elephants and horses was dark like a cloud and in it the great warriors

shone like burning fire and were quite incapable of being stared at like the sun. The Vanaras at this roared repeatedly with trees and stones in their hands. The Rakshasas too yelled in war-delight at the sight of the Vanara army.

Then the Vanaras entered the Rakshasa line that extended like a range of hills. Some began to roam in the sky and some in the field of battle being restless with rage. Then a fierce fight ensued. The Vanaras began to shower trees and stones upon the Rakshasas, and the Rakshasas prevented them by their sharp arrows. The Vanaras began to strike the Rakshasas with trees and stones. Some of the Rakshasa's heads were pounded with stones and some others' eyes came out of their sockets on account of fist-blows received. The Rakshasas being thus smitten by the Vanaras yelled in unbearable pain.

Then the Rakshasa leaders began to cut the Vanaras in pieces by their sharp lances, swords, Prasas, Saktis and maces. Warriors on both sides began to fight for life and levelled their adversaries to the ground. The battle-field soon became covered with arms and the dead bodies of the Vanara and the Rakshasa soldiers. Blood flowed in streams. Rakshasas struck the Vanaras by snatching away stones and trees from their hands, and the Vanaras too struck the Rakshasas wresting the weapons from their hands. The armours of the Rakshasas were cut and torn and blood oozed out from their bodies like exudation from trees.[1] The

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1 Wordsworth, "The bleeding pines their odorous fums distil."

Vanaras destroyed chariots, elephants and horses with their trees and stones. The Rakshasas cut off the trees and the stones of the Vanaras by their sharp crescent-shaped weapons and lances. Soon the battle assumed a very dreadful aspect.

CHAPTER XLVII

NARANTAKA'S DEATH

In the meantime, Narantaka on horseback entered the Vanara line, as a fish enters the waters of the sea. He held a sharp Sakti in his hand. That hero on entering the Vanara line, in a moment killed seven hundred Vanaras with a Prasa. The denizens of heaven flocked over Narantaka's head to witness his fight. Within a very short time his way became muddy with blood and fat. No sooner had the Vanaras attempted to display their valour, they were cut in pieces by his sharp Sakti. As fire reduces the woods into ashes so Narantaka began to destroy the Vanaras. No sooner had the Vanaras raised trees or stones to hurl, they were struck down like mountains by thunderbolts and lay prostrate on the battle-field. Narantaka began to roam about like a heavy gale during the rains trampling the Vanaras everywhere with his flaming Prasas upraised. Not to speak of fighting, the Vanaras were speechless with wonder and could not even stand before him. Narantaka cut into pieces with his flaming Prasa in whatever position he found one either seated, or standing upon a chariot.

When that Prasa fell upon the object aimed at, it hit like a thunder-bolt, and the Vanaras being unable to stand before that dreadful weapon, yelled in agony they fell on the ground like-cut-down trees or like cliffs, cleft by lightning.

But in the meantime, the Vanaras who had been wounded in their fight with Kumbhakarna, recovered from their injuries and came to Sugriva. Sugriva found that the Vanaras being greatly frightened were running away in panic from Narantaka. At that Sugriva addressing prince Angada said, "My boy ! go and slay that warrior on horseback, who is devouring the Vanaras."

Thereupon, at the command of Sugriva, Angada issued forth from the army, like the sun emerging from a bank of clouds. Heroic Angada was black like a dense hill and for carrying a golden club, he looked like a mountain tinged with (shining) minerals. He had no weapons, but his nails and teeth were his weapons. After presenting himself before Narantaka, Angada said, "What is the good of fighting with those Vanaras? Now strike my chest with that Prasa."

At that, Narantaka was inflamed with rage; he bit his lips with his teeth, and heaving a deep breath, like a python, he hurled the flaming Prasa against Angada's breast. The Prasa fell into pieces coming in contact with the adamantime breast of Angada. Then Angada seeing that Prasa weapon thus frustrated, dealt a severe slap on the head of Narantaka's charger.

By that slap the head of the steed was smashed, its eyes came out of their sockets and its legs entered deep into the earth. Narantaka was greatly enraged seeing his horse thus destroyed and he dealt a heavy fist-blow on Angada's head. Angada was greatly pained and he began to vomit hot blood. He was stunned, but recovering his consciousness, he dealt a fatal bow on Narantaka's chest. His ribs were broken and blood came out from the mouth. Narantaka fell dead like a mountain struck by lightning. The gods were greatly delighted at the destruction of Narantaka and the Vanaras shouted for joy and Rama too was much astonished at this heroic feat and got ready for battle.

Chapter XLVIII

OTHER CAPTAINS' DEATH

Seeing Narantaka thus slain, heroic Devantaka, Trimurdha and Mahodara began to roar in rage. Mahodara was on the back of a huge elephant. He rushed towards Angada. Devantaka being furious at the death of his brother, quickly advanced with formidable Parigha against Angada. Finding the Rakshasas advancing towards him, Trisira advanced in his glittering chariot yoked with spirited horses. Angada uprooted a huge tree with its branches and hurled it against Devantaka with great violence. Thereupon, Angada took up another tree. Trisira and Mahodara cut that in pieces with arrows and the Parigha.

Then heroic Trisira advanced towards Angada showering arrows on him. Mahodara in anger struck Angada on the chest with a thunder-like Tomara. Devantaka having struck Angada with a Parigha soon disappeared from the spot. But heroic Angada, though attacked simultaneously by several Rakshasas, was not a bit unnerved. Then Angada dealt a severe slap on the head of Mahodara's elephant and the elephant at once breathed its last. Angada then plucked a huge tusk of the elephant and struck Devantaka with it. Devantaka reeled under that blow like a tree tossed by the wind, and blood began to flow in a stream. Devantaka however, regained his consciousness with great difficulty and struck Angada with great violence by a Parigha. Angada fell unconscious by contracting his knees. But he soon recovered and stood up for fight. At the time of standing up, Trisira pierced his forehead with arrows and set up a heroic roar. At that time, heroic Hanuman and Nila seeing Angada thus surrounded by the Rakshasas, advanced towards him. Nila hurled a mountain-peak at Trisira, who cut it into pieces with three shafts. The rock at once fell on the ground by emitting light and sparks. Then, formidable Devantaka rushed towards Hanuman with a Parigha in his hand. Hanuman too frightened the Rakshasas by a terrific roar and hit Devantaka on the head with a thunder-like fist-blow. Devantaka's eyes came out of their sockets, his tongue protruded from his mouth and he at once gave up his ghost.

Thereupon, Trisira being very angry, struck

Nila on the breast with an arrow in great fury. Mahodara again got upon a mountain-like elephant and advanced by illuminating the battle-field with his effulgence, like the sun mounted upon the Mandara Hill, and began to shower volleys of arrows upon Nila in rage. It seemed as if clouds were incessantly raining over a hill. General Nila was wounded by his arrows. He grew inert and listless; then he again plucked a huge rock and hit Mahodara on the head. Mahodara was smashed by that blow and fell like a cliff cleft by thunder. His elephant too was destroyed with him.

Then Trisira seeing his uncle slain by Nila, pierced Hanuman with sharp arrows in rage. Hanuman in fury hurled rocks against him. Trisira too cut that into pieces by his sharp arrows, then Hanuman finding the rock, hurled by him, thus being frustrated, in great violence threw a big tree aiming at Trisira. Trisira cut that in its course through the air and roared in fury. Then as a lion tears up an elephant, so Hanuman tore Trisira's horse by his nails. Heroic Trisira hurled a formidable Sakti, fatal as Death against Hanuman in anger. Hanuman took up that Sakti, like a burning meteor in the sky, and broke it in two. The Vanaras seeing that terrible Sakti thus broken in two roared in delight. Then Trisira struck Hanuman with a sword on the chest. Hanuman too dealt a slap on Trisira's breast. Trisira at once fell unconscious. In the meantime Hanuman snatched away the sword from Trisira and frightened the Rakshasas by his roars. Trisira could not

stand that roar, he stood up and dealt a severe fist-blow to Hanuman. Hanuman's anger was inflamed and he caught Trisira by his neck and severed his head adorned with crown and ear-rings, as Indra, in the days of yore, cut the head of Viswarupa, the son of Viswakarma. The head of that Rakshasa fell on the ground, like a burning planet on the earth. At that sight the Vanaras set up a heroic roar. The earth shook with that and the Rakshasas ran away in great fear. Then heroic Matta, seeing Devantaka and others thus slain, took up a huge club in rage. That iron mace was glittering with plated gold, stained with blood, and was adorned with a red garland. A fierce glow was constantly emitted from its end. At this sight even Super-elephants, as Mahapadma, Sarva-bhauma and Airavata trembled. The infuriated warrior taking up that formidable mace flared up in rage like the doomsday-fire and rushed towards the Vanaras in great speed.

In the meantime, the Kapi chief, Rishabha came forward to meet Matta. Matta hurled that thunderbolt-like mace against Rishabha's breast. Rishabha's chest was pierced. His whole body reeled under that blow and he began to bleed profusely. Rishabha regained his consciousness after a long time, and stared repeatedly at Matta, with his lips quivering in anger. Then he dealt a violent fist-blow at Matta's chest. Matta became covered with blood and at once fell down like a cut down tree.

In the meantime, Rishabha taking up that fatal mace from Matta's hand began to yell in war-delight. Heroic Matta was red like the evening cloud. He was stupefied only for a moment in pain, then regaining his consciousness, he began to strike Rishabha repeatedly. Rishabha fell unconscious and after regaining his senses Rishabha struck Matta on the head with that dreadful mace. By that fatal blow the chest of Matta was smashed, and blood flowed like a stream of molten minerals from a hill. In the meantime, Rishabha rushed towards the Rakshasa army with that mace in his hand, and began to destroy them by whirling it again and again. Matta was pounded by that blow of the mace. He fell dead like a peak smitten by thunder. Then the Rakshasa army ran away for fear of life.

CHAPTER XLIX

ATIKAYA'S FIGHT

Then, Atikaya, the subduer of pride of the Devas and the Danavas, seeing his brothers, mighty like Indra, fallen on the field of battle and finding his uncles, Mahodara and Matta dead and the Rakshasa troops dispersed in fear, became exceedingly angry. He got upon an exceedingly glittering chariot and rushed towards the Vanaras. He had fine ear-rings on his ears and a great bow in his hand. He began to roar by giving out his name repeatedly. That hero brandishing his bow frightened the

Vanaras greatly. The Vanaras thinking him to be Kumbhakarna, on account of his huge body, sought one another's protection. Atikaya looked as formidable as Vishnu, when as a Dwarf he was about to cover the three worlds by his feet. The Vanaras ran away at the very sight of him, and sought the protection of Rama, the shelter of the refugees.

Rama removed their fear by his assurances and saw huge Atikaya seated on an excellent car and roaring like a dark thunder-cloud. He was greatly astonished by his sight and questioned Vibhishana about him :

"O Rakshasa lord ! who is he that is advancing in a chariot glittering as the sun and yoked with a thousand steeds ? Who is that hero whose look is like that of a lion, whose body is like that of a mountain ; who carries a formidable bow in his hand, who being surrounded by various sorts of weapons like Prasas, Tomaras, etc., looks like god Rudra surrounded by goblins ? Who is he that is equipped with a fatal-edged Sakti and looks like a cloud with lightning ; whose gold-plated bow is adorning the chariot as a rainbow beautifies the sky ; whose flag and staff bear royal insignia, whose bow is beautiful like the rainbow resting against a bank of clouds, whose chariot is decorated with flags and staffs, and is driven by four charioteers with a deep rumbling noise like that of a (distant) cloud and where there are thirty-eight bows and quivers full of dreadful arrows ; two swords, each ten cubits long and furnished

with handles four cubits in length. Who is he that wears a red garland on his neck, whose countenance is dreadful like Death ; who is of black colour, who is emitting an effulgence like the sun free from clouds, whose arms are protected with golden armlets, and for them looks like the Himalayas, whose dreadful face being adorned with fine ear-rings looks like the full-moon in the midst of the Punarvasu stars, and at whose sight the Vanaras are running away in fear ?"

Vibhishana replied, "Rama ! he is the son of the Rakshasa king ; in prowess he is like his father and his name is Atikaya. He is versed in all the Shastras and is obedient to the aged. He is a skilful rider ; can ride elephants also and is expert in the use of sword and bow. He has also efficiency in polity. In short, relying on his prowess, the city of Lanka rests free from fear. Queen Dhanyamalini is the mother of this great hero. He has propitiated Brahma by his penance, and on account of weapons received from Brahma as his boons, he is invincible of the Gods and the Asuras. He has obtained by his penance excellent armours and chariot. Danavas were defeated by him. He protected the Rakshasas and destroyed the Yakshas. Once he even frustrated Indra's thunder-bolt and Varuna's Pasa by his arms. Soon get ready to destroy that hero, for he will immediately begin to rout the Vanara army."

Then heroic Atikaya, entering amongst the Vanaras began to roar repeatedly by brandishing

his bow. In the meantime, Kumuda, Dvivida, Mainda, Nila, and Sarabha seeing that dreadful Rakshasa, rushed forward with trees and stones. Atikaya cut down those trees and stones with his arrows and began to pierce them with iron shafts. They were defeated by Atikaya and were quite helpless for revenge. Then as a young lion frightens the deer herd, so Atikaya frightened the Vanara troops, but he never struck any one amongst his enemies who was unwilling to fight. Then that hero advancing towards Rama proudly said, "Just see I am upon a chariot with a bow in my hand, I do not like to fight against the weaklings who are afraid of their lives. Let them alone who are strong and possess enthusiasm for battle, fight against him."

Thereupon, Lakshmana approached Atikaya in anger and took up his bow with a cheerful countenance. Then taking a shaft from the quiver he began to twang his bow repeatedly before Atikaya. The sound of the twanging of his bow filled the earth and the sky. The Rakshasas were greatly alarmed by that.

Mighty Atikaya was greatly astonished at the sound of that twanging and seeing Lakshmana about to fight spoke forth in rage :

"Lakshmana ! thou art a boy, you have no knowledge of real heroism. Go away, why do you wish to fight against such a fatal enemy like Death ? The Himalayas and the earth could not resist my arrows. Why do you wish to provoke a smouldering fire ? Go away lea-

ving aside your bow. Don't lose your life at my hands. But I find you to be of a haughty nature and you don't wish to go back. So now be despatched to the realm of death. My sharp arrows are like the trident of Rudra the god of gods, and they are the vanquishers of the pride of the enemies. You will immediately feel this effect. As the angry lion sucks the blood of an elephant so this snake-like arrow will, in no time, drink your blood."

Then heroic Lakshmana hearing these proud words of Atikaya, said, "O Rakshasa! you can't be great only by words, one can never be good by self-praise. Here do I stand before you with bow in hand, prove your prowess to me. Don't brag in vain, but show your might by act. He who has valour is a hero. Just show your prowess by any means you like; then I shall sever thy head by arrows as the wind knocks down a ripe palm by its force. This weapon of mine will drink blood from the wound it will cause. Don't slight me thinking me to be a mere boy. Consider me as Death personified, whether I be young or old. Lord Vishnu covered the three worlds even assuming the form of a dwarf."

When the two warriors were thus bandying words between them, the gods, Vidyadharas and Guhyakas waited to witness the fight.

Then Atikaya being greatly enraged at Lakshmana's words, fixed an arrow to his bow and discharged it with great force. Lakshmana cut off that snake-like shaft with a crescent-shaped

arrow. Atikaya seeing his arrow frustrated like a cut-off snake, discharged another five arrows in great anger. Lakshmana again cut down those arrows, and sent off a flaming shaft against Atikaya. It struck him on his forehead and looked like a snake gone half into a hill. Atikaya then shook with pain like the fate of Tripura Asura struck by Rudra's shafts.

Afterwards recovering a little, Atikaya said, "Lakshmana, you have sent off an irresistible arrow; you are a praiseworthy adversary." Thus saying Atikaya took his seat in front of his chariot and took five or seven arrows and discharged them against Lakshmana. The arrows in their course lighted up the sky, but Lakshmana did not grow nervous, and without any haste coolly cut down those shafts in pieces.

Then Atikaya seeing his arrows thus frustrated discharged another shaft towards Lakshmana. That arrow pierced Lakshmana's breast and blood came out of it, as drops of exudation come out from the temple of an elephant.

Lakshmana after recovering a little, took up a fire-arm and charmed it with mantras. The bow and the arrow became luminous with its glow. At that time, Atikaya aimed a dreadful fire-arm at Lakshmana. Lakshmana, too, discharged that fierce weapon against Atikaya. Both those arms were glowing with fire and they fell down burning each other in the sky. Those two shafts though formerly glowing with fire, having clashed against each other, were reduced to ashes and their fire was extinguished.

At this, Atikaya in wrath threw Aishika arm at Lakshmana. Lakshmana countered it by the Aindra weapon. On the Aishika weapon being thus frustrated, Atikaya discharged the Varuna weapon at Lakshmana, Lakshmana countered it by the Vayavya weapon. Then Lakshmana in anger discharged volleys of arrows upon Atikaya as showers of rain. But all those broke down coming in contact with Atikaya's armour wrought in diamonds. Heroic Lakshmana thus finding his arrows frustrated again discharged volleys of arrows against Atikaya. Atikaya, however, was covered with an armour; so those arrows could not hurt him in any way.

In the meantime, Vayu approaching Lakshmana said, "O hero! Atikaya is covered with an impenetrable armour which he has obtained as a boon from Brahma; so pierce him with a Brahma weapon; without that there is no other means of destroying him. If this warrior is protected by that armour, he can't be destroyed by any weapon."

Thereupon, Lakshmana, mighty as Indra, took up the terrible Brahma weapon. When he aimed that Brahma weapon, it agitated the sun, the moon and the planets, and the earth shook, as if in an earthquake. Lakshmana fixed that fatal Brahma weapon to his bow and hurled it like thunder against Atikaya. The Brahma weapon was wrought in diamond, and it made its way along the sky having its speed increased in its course. Then Atikaya seeing that Brahma weapon coming towards him tried to baffle it

by sharp arrows, but it flew towards him like the bird Garuda.

Atikaya in order to thwart that weapon threw with all his might Sakti, lance, Rishti, axe and mace. But all those were baffled by that weapon and it severed Atikaya's head adorned with crown. Atikaya's head at once fell on the ground like a peak of the Himalayas. His ornaments and dress lay scattered and the Rakshasas were greatly pained at the sight of Atikaya's fall. They began to clamour in fear and pain and ran towards Lanka. The faces of the Vanara troops beamed like the blooming lotus, and they began to praise Lakshmana loudly at the death of formidable Atikaya.

CHAPTER L

ENCOURAGED BY INDRAJIT

Ravana, the Rakshasa king, hearing of Atikaya's death was smitten with grief and addressing the Rakshasas said, "O Rakshasas! Dhumraksha, Prahasta, Kumbhakarna and others were invincible heroes. They were huge, strong and versed in arms, but Rama has destroyed them and other Rakshasa heroes. That day, famous Indrajit bound them with divine arms. The gods, Asuras, Yakshas and the Uragas even cannot unite that bond. But I know not how those two heroes liberated themselves from that bond whether by magic or by strength. Those Rakshasas that were sent by me to battle, have been destroyed by the

Vanaras. To tell the truth, there is no hero now who can by his prowess destroy Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Vibhishana. How mighty is Rama ? How irresistible must be his weapons ! Now let sentries carefully guard Lanka and the Ashoka forest where Janaki lives surrounded by the Rakshasis. After this the entry and exit of everybody must be carefully reported. Go and lie in ambush with your armies where there are shrubs and groves. You must always watch the movements of the adversaries in the morning, evening and at night. Indifference about it is not at all advisable. Whether the enemy is full of preparations or advancing or are stationed in their former place must always be carefully observed."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas commenced their work according to the directions of Ravana. Ravana too with a sorrow-stricken heart entered his palace. The fire of his wrath was kindled again and he began to brood over the death of his sons heaving deep sighs off and on.

Then the surviving Rakshasas soon appearing before Ravana said, "O Lord ! Devantaka and other warriors have fallen on the field of battle."

At this news, the eyes of Ravana became bedewed with tears, and he became extremely agitated thinking of the destruction of his sons and brother.

In the meantime, great Indrajit seeing Ravana thus plunged in grief and said, "Father ! why are you so sad and anxious so long Indrajit

is alive. There is none who can survive in my fight. You wait and you will see Rama and Lakshmana dead, pierced by my arrows. Relying on my valour as well as upon my luck I take my vow that I shall destroy Rama and Lakshmana by my irresistible arrows.

"Today, Indra, Yama, Vishnu, Rudra, Sadhya, Vaiswanara, Chandra and Surya will witness my valour as once displayed by Vishnu, in the form of a dwarf, in the sacrifice of Vali."

After assuring Ravana with bold words, the great hero, Indrajit, ascended his car. His chariot was full of weapons, yoked with asses, and in speed, it was like the wind. Getting upon this excellent car Indrajit cheerfully proceeded for battle. A large number of soldiers followed him with bows and arrows in hand. Amongst them some were seated upon elephants ; some on horses ; some on tigers ; some on scorpions ; some on cats ; some on asses ; some on camels ; some on snakes ; some on boars ; some on lions ; some on jackals ; huge as hills ; some on crows ; some on ducks ; and some others on peacocks. All those mighty warriors were equipped with Prasas, maces, swords, clubs and axes. Indrajit moved with all these in violent speed. Trumpets and conch-shells sounded loud. A moon-white umbrella spread over Indrajit's head, as the full moon shines in the sky. On his either side white chowris with gold handles were being waved. As the firmament looks bright

with the sun, so the city of Lanka shone by the presence of this matchless warrior.

On arriving at the field of battle, Indrajit stationed the Rakshasas on all sides. The name of that place was Nikumbhila. Reaching there, Indrajit commenced a sacrifice for victory. He began to propitiate the god of fire duly by offering incense, wreaths of flowers and offerings of fried rice, and by chanting mantras. Arrows served for Kusa grass and a deep iron ladle was laid ; the barks of the Vibhitaka tree served for fig twigs and robes were dyed red to make meat preparations for the sacrifice.[1] After lighting the sacrificial fire, Indrajit seized a black goat by its throat. As soon as that goat was thrown as an offering into fire, its smokeless glare spread on all sides, and omens of victory gradually appeared. The god of fire himself rose in his image, of shining gold and accepted the offerings by spreading out his hands. He again obtained Brahma weapons granted by Brahma. He then sanctified by that heavenly weapon and sacred Mantras his chariot and bow. The whole firmament with the sun, the moon and the planets shook, when he invoked the presiding deity of the Brahma weapons. by casting offering to the sacrificial fire.

Indrajit then vanished in the sky with his bow, arrows, lance, and sword along with his chariot yoked with horses.

1 For success in an undertaking, as victory in battle, sacrificial rites were often performed by the Vedic Hindus, and various offerings were thrown into sacrificial fire. Here some details have been given.

Chapter LI

THE VICTORY OF INDRAJIT

Afterwards, the Rakshasa army carrying flags and staffs commenced a heavy fighting and began to strike the Vanaras with Tomaras, goads and wonderful shafts.

Casting his eyes upon the Rakshasa troops Indrajit said, "Fight bravely for the destruction of the Vanaras." Thereupon, the Rakshasas with great enthusiasm began to strike the Vanaras vigorously, and Indrajit over their head began to spread havoc amongst the Vanara army by his irresistible arms. The Vanaras began to throw trees and stones incessantly at him. Indrajit in anger began to rout the Vanara troops. At that, the Rakshasas were extremely delighted, and each and every shaft of Indrajit took a number of Vanaras as its toll. Thus the defeated Vanaras began to disperse in fear and gave up all desire for a fight. They fell in great numbers like the Asuras in the war with the gods. Indrajit was like the glowing sun and his arrows were its rays!

The Vanaras made another desperate attempt, but they were soon routed and began to fall back in fear. Then they began to fight for Rama with all their possible might, and began to throw heavy stones at him. But victorious Indrajit easily baffled those dangerous volleys of stones and scattered them by his sharp arrows. His fiery shafts like snakes began to smother the Vanaras. Indrajit then pierced Gandhama-

-dana with eighteen arrows and Nala with nine, Mainda with seven sharp arrows, Gaja with five, Jamvuvan and Nila with ten. He then fatally struck with formidable shafts, obtained by way of boon, Sugriva, Rishabha, Angada and Dvivida. They remained as dead. Then flaring up in wrath like the doomsday-fire, Indrajit began to destroy the Vanaras with his dreadful arms, and was delighted seeing the Vanaras dispersing in fear with their bodies streaming in blood. Then, after smothering the Vanaras for some time with his formidable arms, Indrajit again vanished in the sky and began to shower arrows upon the Vanaras as the clouds pour forth rains. The huge Vanaras thus being molested by his arrows began to shriek in agony and they fell like thunder-smitten cliffs on the ground. At that time only his sharp shafts were seen but none could see Indrajit hidden by the spell of magic.

Then Indrajit covered the face of the sky with his formidable shafts and began to shower various arms like drops of fire on the heads of the Vanaras. The Vanaras with their bodies bathed in blood, looked like so many Kinsuka trees in blossom. At that time whoever looked up, his eyes were pierced. The Vanaras clasped each other for fear of their lives and some saved themselves by lying prostrate on the ground. Indrajit by his arms wounded Hanuman, Sugriva, Angada, Gandhamadana, Jamvuvan, Susena, Mainda, Dvivida, Nila, Gavaksha, Gavaya, Vidyut-danshtra, Suryanana. Dadhimukha, Pavaksha, Nala and Kumuda. After thus vanquishing the

Vanara leaders, Indrajit began to shower his shafts upon Rama and Lakshmana. Then Rama seeing Indrajit's incessant volleys of arrows falling like showers of rain, after surveying everything carefully, turned to Lakshmana and said, "My boy! Indrajit after destroying the army by his magic is now discharging his arrows at us. This hero is proud of the boon obtained from Brahma; his formidable self is now invisible; so it is not possible to kill him now. It is his weapon whose virtues and powers are unthinkable: this weapon was obtained from that Self-born Divinity who is the creator and destroyer of the universe. O intelligent one! bear it this day by thinking of that great God along with me. Let the formidable hero, Indrajit cover us with his shafts. The Vanara army already appears very poor. Let us now lie inert like senseless things on earth. Seeing us in this plight Indrajit will surely return to Lanka being assured of his victory."

Then Rama and Lakshmana were smothered by the arrows of Indrajit. Seeing them thus humbled and cast into grief, Indrajit roared in delight, and went back to Lanka, protected by Ravana, greeted with the praises of the Rakshasas, cheerfully narrated everything before his father.

CHAPTER LII

VIBHISHANA'S ADVICE

Seeing Rama and Lakshmana thus lying inert and the Vanara army lying senseless, wise Vibhishana said, "O heroes, don't be afraid. There is no cause of grief or despair, worshipful Rama and Lakshmana are lying on the ground out of respect towards Divine Brahma. It is through His blessings that Indrajit has obtained such irresistible arrows. Rama and Lakshmana out of respect towards that weapon have fallen prostrate on the ground and lying inert as dead. So you have no cause for grief."

Then intelligent Hanuman honouring the Brahma weapon said to Vibhishana, "O Rakshasa chief ! these mighty Vanaras have been slain by the Brahma weapon. Let us now encourage the fainting ones."

Then those two heroes in that night began to roam over the field of battle with torches in their hands. They found the battle-field covered with arms and the dead bodies of the huge Vanaras. Of the Vanaras, the tails of some, hands of some, the thighs of some, the legs of some and the necks of others were severed. Blood was flowing in streams from their bodies and some of them writhed in fear. Heroic Sugriva, Angada, Nila, Gandhamadana, Susena, Mainda, Nala, Jyotirmukha and Dvivida were lying like dead bodies on the field of battle. Indrajit by his Brahma weapon had slain sixty seven hundred million Vanaras.

Vibhishana seeing the Vanara army vast as an outstretched expanse of the sea, in that distressed condition began to search for Jamvuvan —the Riksha[1] king. Jamvuvan had grown old in due course of nature. Being struck with the arrow, he lay like a steady flame of fire. Having espied him, Vibhishana approached him and said :

"O worshipful one, art thou alive ?"

Then Jamvuvan with great difficulty answered, "Vibhishana ! I have recognised you only by your voice. I have been smitten with arrows. I can't see you with my eyes. Let me ask you one thing ; is Hanuman, the pride of Anjana, and of the wind-god, alive ?"

Vibhishana said, "O Rakshasa chief ! why do you ask about Hanuman without enquiring about worshipful Rama and Lakshmana ? Such love and affection which you now show towards Hanuman has not been shown by Sugriva or Angada towards Rama."

Thereupon, Jamvuvan said, "Listen to me, I have enquired about Hanuman. If that great hero be alive, then even if our army be wholly destroyed, yet I shall reckon them to be living, but if he is dead, then, if our army be living still, I would consider them dead, to speak the truth, our lives and hopes depend upon that great hero, who is swift as wind and mighty as fire."

Then Hanuman came near old Jamvuvan and respectfully bowed down to him. At that

1 Riksha means a bear.

time Jamvuvan was in great affliction and pain, he seemed to revive at his words, and said, "My boy! come and save the Vanaras. Thou art their greatest friend and there is no greater hero than you. Now, the time has come to display your prowess and I find nobody else who can stand in this critical juncture. Just restore the Vanaras and the Bhallukas to their lives. Rama and Lakshmana are lying half-dead; now draw out the shafts that have stuck deep into them. My boy! just hie to the distant Himalayas, coursing over the sea. After that, you will come across the Rishabha mountain full of fierce animals whence you will find the Kailasa mountain. Between these two mountains there stands the mountain of medicines full of medicinal plants.

"You will find there on its peak, Mritasanjivani, Visalyakarani, Suvarnakarani and Sandhani,—these four kinds of medicinal herbs. Those shining medicinal herbs, you will find, have illumined the surroundings by their halo of effulgent energy. Come back soon with those four kinds of medicinal plants and soon restore the Vanaras to their lives."

Thereupon, the great hero, Hanuman, hearing these words of Jamvuvan, debated within, and his mind was agitated as the ocean is heaved up by the wind. He ascended the Trikuta hill and stood like a peak upon the Trikuta hill. The Trikuta bent down under the pressure of his feet. By the force of Hanuman's fight the mountain trees fell in number

and by their friction a fire was generated. The peaks fell scattered and masses of rocks were pounded into dust and the whole mountain began to shake. Then the Vanaras could no longer remain on that hill. The houses and the city-gates of Lanka were going through a (weird) dance. In that night, all creatures were overwhelmed with fear, and the earth with its oceans began to toss. Heroic Hanuman by opening wide his flaming, horse-like mouth began to roar and the Rakshasas lay inert from fear. Hanuman got himself ready for the work of Rama after bowing down to the ocean. By throwing up his snake-like tail, by lowering his back, he contracted his ears, and by opening wide his mouth, gave a mighty spring in the sky. By the force of his flight trees, stones and small monkeys that were on the hill were raised up and fell into the sea. Heroic Hanuman with meteoric speed flew through the sky outspreading his arms. The sea became agitated with all its animals. Hanuman proceeded in great speed like the disc flung by Vishnu's hand. He, in the course of flight, passed over streams, lakes, hills, forests, villages and cities. He never felt tired and flew like the bird Garuda by filling different quarters with the deep noise of his flight. He saw from distance the Himalayas with its sounding cataracts, woody caves, snowy cliffs and dense rows of trees. Hanuman crossed the Himalayas with the speed of the wind. He found many sacred hermitages standing upon the mountain. He found there different places as

the Brahmasira, silvery spots, the place standing where god Rudra discharged his shaft, the abode of Indra, Hayagriva region, Yamakinkara place, the place of fire, the region of Kuvera, the meeting place of the flaming Sun, the Brahma spot, and the navel of the earth.

Hanuman espied the foremost of mountains the Kailasa, the spot of meditation of god Rudra, and of the great Bull, and the golden mountain of medicines, full of luminous medicinal herbs. He was greatly astonished at the sight of the mountain of medicines flaming like a column of fire, and springing upon it, he began to look for the medicines, Hanuman crossed thousands of yojanas in the mountain of medicines. In the meantime, the medicines finding one looking for them, suddenly disappeared from sight. Then Hanuman grew exceedingly angry and his eyes began to glow like fire. With a deep roar he said, "O mountain! why don't you show favour and sympathy to Rama? What is the cause of this slight towards him? I shall immediately punish you for this misconduct. You will instantly find yourself scattered by the prowess of my arms."

Saying this, Hanuman violently plucked a mountain-peak. That peak was covered with woods, tinged with gold and other minerals, and its crown was luminous. Its stones fell in different directions and herds of elephants were roaming over it. Hanuman taking that peak, to the great panic of Indra and other gods, rose up

in the sky. The denizens of the sky being astonished at this heroic feat of Hanuman began to praise him loudly. He flew like Garuda. The luminous peak in his hand, was incapable of being gazed upon like the glowing sun. At that time, he looked like another sun by the side of the sun ! As God Vishnu shines in heaven by holding his disc, luminous with intense rays, so that tall hero appeared with that cliff in his hand. The Vanaras shouted for joy having espied him from a distance.

Hanuman too at the sight of the Vanaras began to roar repeatedly. Thereupon, the Rakshasas of Lanka roared back in a thundering noise.

In no time Hanuman alighted upon Lanka and after greeting the chiefs of the Vanaras he embraced Vibhishana.

At the very smell of the medicines, Rama and Lakshmana were perfectly cured and other Vanaras too gradually came round and stood upon their legs. As people rise from their sleep in the morning, so they rose from their stupor.

The Rakshasas, however, could not be revived, for all the Rakshasas that were slain, were thrown into the sea at the command of Ravana, lest their number might be counted.

Then, Hanuman again took back the mountain of medicines to the Himalayas and placed it in the proper place and returned.

Chapter LIII

LANKA IN FLAMES

After that, Sugriva, the Kapi king, deciding on a course of action, addressing Hanuman, said, "O hero! since Kumbhakarna and other princes have been slain, I do not know how Ravana will defend Lanka any more? Let the strong and courageous Vanaras from our side fall upon Lanka with burning torches."

The sun went down, and in the dark evening, the Vanaras proceeded towards Lanka with torches in hand.

The uneven-eyed Rakshasas that were guarding the city-gates of Lanka, took to their heels at the sight of those formidable Vanaras proceeding with lighted torches in their hands. The Vanaras, then in delight, set fire to the city-gates, upper houses, to all the high roads and narrow lanes, and to the palaces. In no time, the fire was ablaze and it put forth its cruel tongues in all directions. High palaces began to burn and crumble into pieces. Aguru, fine sandal, pearls, polished gems, diamonds, and corals—everything was reduced to ashes. All kinds of clothes spun from flax, silk, and lambs' wool, golden vessels, excellent harness, elephant's gear, armours of the warriors, protecting covers of the elephants and horses, various kinds of arms, hairy blankets, chowris, horses, various kinds of arms, hairy blankets, chowris, tiger's skin, musk, sacrificial rooms, bedsteads,

household furniture—everything was burnt to ashes.

The Rakshasas were clad in golden armours, they wore garlands and had put on excellent dress ; they were walking fast in staggering gait under the influence of wine, and their wives in fear followed them clinging by the ends of their clothes.

The wrath of the Rakshasas became kindled at this sudden act of arson by the Vanaras, and they came out with swords, lances and axes in their hands. Some were taking their meals, some were drinking, and some were happily asleep on fine beds with their wives, finding themselves hemmed in on all sides by fire, they came out in great alarm, holding young children by their arms. Everything was in blaze and fire leaped in all directions. The mansions of Lanka were costly and strong-built. Some of them were like the full moon, and some were crescent-shaped, their wide chambers,[1] windows and lattices were fine and wonderful, and their diases were well-built. Those upper chambers were made of gold and wrought with corals and gems, and in their heights, they seemed to touch the sky and became echoed with the cries of startled peacocks and cranes. Fire began to consume those spacious rooms. The flaming city-gate looked like a cloud lit up with lightning, and the burning houses appeared like so many peaks encircled by forest-fire. In that fatal night,

1 It may mean spacious arrangement for light

women that were fast asleep in seven-storied palaces, being scorched by fire, threw off their ornaments and shrieked in pain. The burning houses fell with a crash like the peaks of a mountain struck down by lightning, and from a distance they shone like the peaks of the Himalayas consumed by forest-fire. The roofs of the palaces were lit up with cruel flame. At that time, Lanka appeared like a Kinsuka tree in blossom. The people in fear untied the horses and elephants. At that time Lanka (with its hubbub) appeared like an eddying ocean with sharks and crocodiles in it. Somewhere, the horse bolted at the sight of an elephant, while at another place, the elephant ran away at the sight of a steed. The waters of the ocean looked red with the glow of that mighty fire and reflections of the burning houses fell on its restless water. Lanka was thus on fire.

The cries of women enveloped in smoke and fire, could be heard from a distance of hundreds of leagues. The Rakshasas who were then coming out with their burning bodies were suddenly attacked by the Vanaras, and the air became resounded with their yells.

In the meantime, Rama and Lakshmana, having their arrows removed, cheerfully took up their bows and quivers. A great noise was produced as Rama twanged his bow. Rama looked like angry Rudra and the twanging of his bow drowned the clamours of the Rakshasas. The hills crumbled by his arrows. Seeing Rama's shafts penetrating their palaces and abodes, the Rakshasas got ready for battle.

In the meantime, Sugriva gave instructions to attack the gate that lay nearest to one. "Whoever will run away is certainly disobedient to me; you must kill that wicked fellow."

Seeing the Vanaras standing with torches at the city-gate, the wrath of Ravana was fiercely kindled. The air ejected from his mouth filled all directions, and the wrath of god Rudra seemed to be mirrored on his countenance.

Then calling Kumbha and Nikumbha, sons of Kumbhakarna, near him, he said, "My boys! proceed with a big army to the field of battle."

At this, Kumbha and Nikumbha started for fight. Yupaksha, Shonitaksha, Prajangha and Kampana followed them. Ravana set up a heroic roar and said, "Rakshasas! go and fight at night."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas issued forth with shining arms. The sky became lit up with the sheen of their ornaments and apparel and by the fiery glow of the Vanaras.

The light of the moon and the stars and the halo of the apparel of the heroes on both sides, lighted up the intervening sky between the two armies.

The Vanaras found the Rakshasa army well-equipped, sufficiently provided with horses, elephants and various kinds of arms. Their zones were producing a tinkling sound. Their bows were strung, arrows fixed to them, and the air became scented with the sweet fragrance used by them. The Rakshasas attacked the Vanaras

violently, like moths leaping into flames. Vanaras began to strike them with stones, trees and fist-blows. The Rakshasas began to sever their heads with sharp weapons, and the Rakshasas in their turn were being destroyed by the Vanaras. Some were cursing, some abusing, some bragging of their prowess, and some were challenging their antagonists. And in no time a heavy fight ensued between the two parties.

When the fight thickened, Angada approached Kampana, who being enraged for the wounds received, dealt a severe slap on Angada's breast and Angada fell unconscious. But he soon recovered and hurled a peak against Kampana, who died from that blow. In the meantime, Shonitaksha came near Angada and began to strike with sharp arrows. Shonitaksha hurled several kinds of sharp weapons against Angada, Angada being thus hurt fell upon Kampana, destroyed his bow, arrows and the chariot. Thereupon, Kampana took up his sword and shield. Angada siezed him with a spring and snatching off his sword cut him vertically in two pieces and proceeded to another place. In the meantime, Yupaksha being greatly enraged soon came near Angada, along with Prajangha. Shonitaksha too having recovered a little came there with his iron mace. Angada being stationed between Prajangha and Shonitaksha appeared like the full moon between the two Vishakha stars. Mainda and Dvivida were protecting his flanks and the Vanaras were waiting to fight the Rakshasas. The Rakshasas in fury attacked them with swords, maces and bows and arrows. The

Vanaras began to hurl trees and stones against them. Prajangha cut those trees and stones in pieces and the Vanaras in their turn reduced his chariot to atoms. Mainda and Dvivida attacked the Rakshasas in great fury, but Shonitaksha frustrated their attacks.

Then Prajangha attacked Angada with a huge sword. Angada uprooted an Aswakarna tree and struck Prajangha on his wrist and the sword fell down from Prajangha's grasp. At this Prajangha dealt a severe blow like a thunder, Angada remained stunned for some time. Then, on recovering, Angada broke Prajangha's head with a tremendous fist-blow.

Yupaksha seeing his uncle thus slain got down from the chariot with tearful eyes. He had no more arrows in his quiver, and so he rushed with his sword. Thereupon, heroic Dvivida struck Yupaksha with a huge stone on his chest. Then a fierce fight ensued between the two. In the meantime, Shonitaksha struck Dvivida with his mace; Dvivida groaned under that blow, but finding Shonitaksha about to strike again, he snatched away that mace from his hand.

In the meantime, Mainda came near Dvivida and a heavy fight ensued. Dvivida struck Shonitaksha on his face and pounded him to atoms. Mainda too in fury killed Yupaksha by smashing his ribs. At that, the Rakshasa soldiers in despair ran to Kumbha.

CHAPTER LIV

KUMBHA'S FIGHT

Kumbha encouraged them by his assurances and found that most of the heroes had been slain by the Vanaras. Kumbha commenced a desperate fight against the Vanaras, and that great warrior, foremost of bowmen began to tear and cut the Vanaras by his sharp arrows. He struck Dvivida with a gold-plated arrow. Dvivida fell wounded by stretching apart his legs. Then Mainda struck Kumbha with a huge piece of rock, but heroic Kumbha cut that into pieces by five sharp arrows and struck Mainda with another shaft on the chest. Mainda fell unconscious from that blow.

Then, Angada seeing Dvivida and Mainda thus worsted in the fight, rushed forward towards Kumbha with a violent speed. Kumbha wounded Angada with a number of arrows as one wounds an elephant with a goad. Angada, though wounded, was not the least overcome, but he incessantly showered trees and stones on Kumbha's head. But Kumbha's arrows cut them in pieces. Angada rushed forward, but Kumbha struck him with two arrows that pierced his brows. Blood blinded his eyes. Then Angada covering his eyes with one hand, plucked a tree with the other. That tree had a number of branches. Angada rested it against his breast and cleared it of all branches and leaves. Then the Sala tree looked like the flagstaff of Indra. Angada hurled it with great

violence at Kumbha. It broke Kumbha's arrows, but Kumbha in wrath struck Angada with seven sharp arrows. Angada reeled under that blow and fell unconscious on the ground.

When Angada fell and lay like a calm sea, the Vanaras in haste informed Rama about it.

Rama despatched Jamvuvan and others for the protection of Angada. The Vanaras at once arrived there with trees and stones in their hands. Jamvuvan, Sushena and Vegodarshi in wrath ran towards Kumbha. Then Kumbha prevented their advance as one checks a stream with rocks and stones. Everything was covered with arrows, and as nothing is discernible in a vast ocean, so nothing could be marked there in the field of battle.

In the meantime, Sugriva approached and ran after Kumbha as a lion goes after a wild elephant of the hill, and hurled Aswakarna and other trees at Kumbha. But Kumbha cut all of them in pieces, and the trees fell with a crash. But Sugriva was not at all moved by it, nor did he mind the arrows that wounded him all over the body, but he meekly bore all. Sugriva then snatched Kumbha's bow and broke it in two, and Kumbha looked miserable like an elephant whose tusk had been broken.

Sugriva then addressing Kumbha said, "Kumbha ! surely your prowess and the force of your arrows are wonderful. In might, thou art like Prahlad and Vali, in valour like Varuna and Kuvera. Amongst the Rakshasas, only Ravana and you possess true valour. You alone

are like Kumbhakarna in strength. As mental affliction cannot overcome a person who has conquered his senses, so even the gods cannot attack you. Now display your prowess and also witness that of mine. Your uncle, Ravana, conquered the gods and the Asuras by virtue of receiving a boon from heaven, and Kumbhakarna by his own might. You have both the favour of the gods and prowess of your own. In bowmanship you are like great Indrajit and in might, like Ravana, the Rakshasa king. In fact, you are now the foremost of the Rakshasas. This day, the world will witness the great battle between Indra and Samvara Asura. You have accomplished a wonderful feat, and shown marvellous skill in the use of arms. You have slain a number of mighty Vanaras. You are now fatigued. If I kill at this time, people will speak ill of me. In fear of that bad name I refrain from destroying you now. Take rest and then witness my prowess."

Kumbha's energy flared up by this praise of Sugriva. He encircled Sugriva with his hands. Then a fierce struggle and wrestling ensued as between two infuriated elephants. From exhaustion, they began to emit fire and smoke from their mouths. The earth and the ocean shook under their heroic tread. Suddenly Sugriva raised Kumbha from the ground and threw him into the sea. Kumbha fell like a huge rock into the sea crushing all aquatic animals by his weight. Kumbha however soon got up from the sea and struck Sugriva with a thunderlike fist-blow on the chest. Sugriva's

skin was cut and his brows were bruised and blood spurted out from his body. But Sugriva's valour was redoubled at that blow and he dealt a thunderlike severe blow on Kumbha's chest. Kumbha fell down like an extinguished fire, and it seemed as if a flaming meteor fell on earth. Kumbha's ribs were broken, and being infested with the halo of god Rudra, he became dazzling as the sun. The earth shook when he fell and the Rakshasas were extremely frightened at his death.

CHAPTER LV

NIKUMBHA'S DEATH

Nikumbha, on seeing Kumbha thus fallen, rushed towards Sugriva glowing with rage. He held a formidable Parigha in his hand. Its iron handle was wrought in gold and diamonds ; it was encirled with a garland of flowers and it removed the fear of the Rakshasas. It was long and was burning like fire. Nikumbha began to whirl that dreadful Parigha, uttering heroic roars all the while. His breast was protected by an excellent armour, and so his other limbs were. That great hero with that Parigha appeared like a rumbling cloud adorned with the rainbow. The sky with its stars and planets and the city of Alaka seemed to spin round by the whirling of that Parigha. Nikumbha shone

like the doomsday-fire. His anger was its fuel and the Parigha was its flame. At that time, that great warrior became quite inaccessible to others, and both the Vanaras and the Rakshasas stood in awe of him. In the meantime, heroic Hanuman approached Nikumbha by baring his breast. Long-armed Nikumbha hurled that glittering Parigha at Hanuman and it struck Hanuman on the breast, but it broke in pieces by coming in contact with that ample, adamantine chest. Its fragments flew in all directions, and they shone like meteoric showers in the sky. Hanuman remained quite unmoved at that blow. Then Hanuman struck Nikumbha with violent strength with a fist-blow on his chest.

Nikumbha's armour was broken by that blow and blood spurted out in jets, and immediately a light flashed forth and sped away, like lightning in the sky.

Then Nikumbha recovering a little seized Hanuman with great violence and dragged him towards Lanka, by raising him up from the ground. The Rakshasas were greatly astonished at this amazing feat and began to shout in delight.

Then Hanuman struck Nikumbha with a fist-blow and freeing himself from Nikumbha's grasp, stood upon the ground. His wrath kindled fiercely. He threw down Nikumbha and began to press him down. Hanuman then got upon Nikumbha and pressed his throat by his hands. Nikumbha began to groan horribly,

Hanuman twisted Nikumbha's neck and tore off his head. The Vanaras roared in delight and resounded the quarters with their roars. The Rakshasas were extremely terrified by that noise.

Ravana hearing of Kumbha's and Nikumbha's death burned with rage. Being overwhelmed with rage and grief, addressing Khara's son, larged-eyed Makaraksha, said, "My boy ! proceed with an army at my command and come back after destroying Rama and Lakshmana with the Vanara hosts."

Makaraksha, proud of his valour, bowed down to Ravana's behest and issued forth after greeting Ravana with due respects.

The commander of the army stood before him. Makaraksha told him to get the army ready without any delay, and the commander obeyed his orders instantly.

Then Makaraksha getting upon his chariot, asked the charioteer to drive him to the battlefield.

Then to encourage the Rakshasas, that warrior said, "O Rakshasas! fight with me. Lord Ravana has asked me to destroy Rama, Lakshmana and the Vanaras, and I shall destroy them today. As fire consumes dry logs of wood so I shall destroy Vanaras with my lance."

The Rakshasas were well-equipped and strong. They were cruel and could assume any form at their will, they were quite formidable in appear-

ance, and had flowing locks. They were roarling like infuriated elephants. Those Rakshasa warriors followed Makaraksha cheerfully.

Every quarter became resounded with the notes of trumpets and the loud sounds of the conch-shells. But the whip slipped from the charioteer's grasp, and the horses could no longer proceed in their proud canter as before; tears rolled down their eyes and they somehow dragged their legs! The wind was tainted with dust particles. But Makaraksha paid no heed to these omens, nor did the Rakshasas who were black as buffaloes and elephants and bore wounds on their strong bodies.

CHAPTER LVI

MAKARAKSHA'S FIGHT

Seeing Makaraksha issuing forth for battle, the Vanaras stood ready for the fight. The Vanaras held trees and stones in their hands. The Vanaras were violently attacked by the Rakshasas and they began to disperse in panic. Thereupon heroic Rama protected the Vanaras by frustrating the shaft of the Rakshasas.

In the meantime, Makaraksha came near Rama and broke forth in anger, "Come now, Rama! I shall fight a duel with you, and shall destroy you with my sharp arrows. You killed my father, Khara, in the Dandaka forest, your sight has kindled my wrath, O villain! I am now burning with rage because at that time

I could not find you there. Fortunately, you have fallen within my sight, you are covetable to me as inferior animals to a hungry lion. This day, you will yourself repair to the region where you have sent others previously in battle. Now, all will witness my prowess and your valour, fight with me with whatever weapons you like, or with mere fists if you wish."

Rama laughed at these words of garrulous Makaraksha and said, "O hero! why do you brag in vain? In battle none can be defeated by mere words. In the Dandaka forest I have slain fourteen thousand Rakshasas along with Khara, Dushana and Trisira. This day, I shall offer your body to the ravenous birds of prey."

At this, Makaraksha discharged a volley of sharp arrows against Rama. Rama cut down those shafts in pieces. Finding his arrows thus frustrated by Rama, Makaraksha commenced a desperate fight.

Then all the quarters became resounded with the twanging of their bows and the sky became covered with their arrows.

Rama cut down Makaraksha's bow and destroyed the chariot with its horses. Makaraksha then jumped down on the ground and raised a formidable lance against Rama. That lance was a gift from god Rudra and it could destroy the world. It glowed with its own effulgence, and the gods moved away at the sight of that terrible weapon. Makaraksha in great fury hurled that lance against Rama, but Rama cut that in pieces by four sharp shafts. At that, the deni-

zens of heaven began to praise Rama. That golden lance fell on the ground like a burning meteor. Then Makaraksha ran towards Rama, raising his arm and saying. "Wait, just wait." Rama then smilingly discharged a fire-arm and Makaraksha fell down being wounded at the heart. Then the Rakshasas were overwhelmed with fear and the gods exalted.

CHAPTER LVII

INDRAJIT SETS OUT

At the news of Makaraksha's death, Ravana's wrath flared up with fierce glow. He ground his teeth in impatient rage. Then deciding on the course of action, he said to Indrajit, "My darling! you are the mightiest warrior amongst all. Now kill Rama and Lakshmana by your prowess, either by remaining visible or invisible through your magic. You have conquered even matchless Indra by your valour, whereas Rama and Lakshmana are only ordinary human beings. Won't you slay them simply out of scorn?"

Thereupon heroic Indrajit resolved to proceed to battle and in order to propitiate the god of fire he repaired first to the sacrificial ground. There the Rakshasa women with red bonnets appeared in haste, and began to make various preparations for the sacrifice. Indrajit covered the flame with offerings and took a black goat by its neck. The fire burned with an intense

smokeless glow and auguries of victories became manifested in it. A golden tongue of flame received the offerings. The sacrifice for victory was complete. Indrajit after gratifying the gods and other supernatural beings made himself invisible, ascending a glittering golden car. His flag-staff was made of sapphire and was encircled by a golden ring, and the flag bore the mark of the crescent moon. The chariot was yoked with four horses.

Heroic Indrajit being equipped with various arms became quite inaccessible, and then said, "This day I shall conquer vagrant Rama and Lakshmana and confer the glory of victory on my father, and shall destroy all the Vanaras of the world to his intense delight."

Then stern Indrajit arriving at the battle-field towering with rage, found heroic Rama and Lakshmana formidably stationed amongst the Vanaras like three-hooded snakes.

As soon as Indrajit recognised them he strung his bow and fixed his arrow to it.

His chariot was invisible and he discharged a volley of arrows against Rama and Lakshmana. Gradually all the quarters became covered with his shafts that were being showered like rains.

Rama and Lakshmana prevented them by their divine arms, but their arrows could not touch Indrajit. Indrajit was concealed behind a veil. He created by magic a screen of smoke and became quite invisible. But the twanging sound of his bow, the rumbling noise

of his chariot, and the clatter of his horse's hoofs could be heard; and Indrajit in anger began to pierce Rama with his shafts received as boon. Rama and Lakshmana were literally under a shower of arrows, like tropical rains. They then began to discharge their arrows which after drawing blood from Indrajit fell on the ground stained with gore. Rama and Lakshmana discharged their arrows towards the direction from which the shafts of Indrajit seemed to proceed. The promptness of Rama and Lakshmana were quite amazing.

Indrajit was moving about unseen and was striking Rama and Lakshmana with his sharp arrows.

Heroic Rama and Lakshmana soon became wounded by Indrajit's arrows. Blood flowed from their bodies and they looked like two Kinsuka trees covered with (deep crimson) blossom. As the sun becomes invisible behind a bank of clouds, so nothing could be detected about Indrajit.

Thus a large number of Vanaras fell by his sharp shafts.

In the meantime Lakshmana said in great rage, "O worshipful lord! this day I shall discharge the Brahma weapon for the destruction of the Rakshasa race."

Then Rama said, "My boy! it is not proper to destroy all the Rakshasas for the offence of a single individual. It is not proper for you to destroy them who are unwilling to fight, or hiding themselves in fear, or seeking protection with

joined palms or running away, or regaling themselves with wine. Let us now kill Indrajit who is a great sorcerer. He is invisible on account of his magic spell. But it is possible for us to slay him though hidden from view. If he once becomes visible, the Vanaras will be able to destroy him with less of effort. If that villain now hides himself within the womb of the earth or enter the Nether region or sky, still he will surely be destroyed by my weapons."

Saying this, heroic Rama with the Vanaras tried to find out means for the destruction of cruel Indrajit.

CHAPTER LVIII

INDRAJIT'S FIGHT

Indrajit's eyes were red with anger at the destruction of his kinsmen. Having discerned the deep motive of Rama, he left the field of battle and entered the city by its western gate. On his way, he found that Rama and Lakshmana had not yet ceased from fighting. Thereupon, that enemy of the gods, Indrajit, resolved to produce an illusion by magic, about the execution of Sita, and with that object he returned to the battle-field. Then, the Vanaras catching sight of him began to hurl missiles of stones and trees against him.

Before others, Hanuman advanced towards Indrajit by plucking a mountain peak. On

advancing, Hanuman saw Janaki on Indrajit's chariot, wearing a single braid of hair. Her face was lean with fasting, and her mind afflicted with sorrow. She was clad with a piece of dirty linen and her body was stained with dust. Hanuman took her to be Janaki and was greatly mortified at seeing her woes. He tried to divine Indrajit's motive. Then with other Vanaras, Hanuman rushed towards Indrajit.

Indrajit was dragging Sita by her hair, and then drew out his sword in the presence of all.

Then the exquisitely beautiful magic Sita cried out, "Alack ! Rama, ah, alack, Rama !"

Hanuman began to shed tears with a grief-stricken heart at the sight of her sufferings. Then Hanuman angrily said to Indrajit, "You villain ! you are doomed to death for touching Janaki's hair. You are born in the line of a Brahmarshi, but still have become a Rakshasa, fie unto you. You are vicious and wicked and have adopted crooked ways at the time of fighting. Shameless creature ! you ought to be ashamed of killing a woman. Cruel-hearted villain ! Janaki is now homeless and helpless, with what heart do you now put her to death ? You are now within my power. If you commit this foul act, you won't survive long, and you will soon reach that abominable region of the murderers of women, that are avoided even by murderers of men."

With these words, Hanuman rushed towards Indrajit. Thereupon Indrajit said, "You vile

Vanara! I shall now slay that Sita before you, Sugriva and Rama; after that, I shall destroy you, Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Anarya[1] Vibhishana. You have just now remarked, that it is improper to slay a woman and in reply to it, let me say that whatever is painful to an enemy is quite proper."

Saying this, Indrajit struck that magic Sita with his sharp sword. Struck by the sword beautiful Sita was cut in two transverse sections.

Then Indrajit said to Hanuman, "You Vanara! just see, I have now put the beloved queen of Rama, Sita to death and have thus frustrated all your endeavours."

Saying this, the ranger of the sky began to roar, opening his mouth wide.

The Vanaras were standing at a short distance. They heard that heroic roar and began to cast sorrowful looks around, and began to fall back in fear.

Then Hanuman addressing the Vanaras said, "Ye warriors! why are you running away in despair? Where has gone your valour? See, I am now advancing forward, just follow me."

Then the Vanaras turned round and passed forward with trees and stones in their hands.

1 Mark the word. Anarya means a non-Aryan, i. e., despicable or low. Indrajit calls Vibhishana a "non-Aryan." Certainly a non-Aryan would not abuse another of his race by calling him a non-Aryan. It therefore stands to reason that the Rakshasas were not non-Aryans as is usually supposed.

Hanuman appeared like Death himself, and began to consume the Rakshasas like fire.

That great hero overwhelmed with grief and rage, hurled a big stone at Indrajit's chariot. But at the slightest spur of the charioteer, the trained horses moved away with the chariot to some distance. The stone missed its aim and fell down crushing many Rakshasas thereby. The Rakshasas were overpowered by the Vanaras, and they began to groan in pain. Thereupon Indrajit rushed forward and began to destroy the Vanaras with his sharp weapons, and the Vanaras began to run away in fear. Then Hanuman addressing the Vanaras said, "Comrades, it is no use to fight with the Rakshasas, since the one for whom we are fighting at the risk of our lives, is no more.

"Let us now proceed and inform Rama and Sugriva about it, and we shall do what they will direct us to do." With these words Hanuman retreated with the Vanaras.

Seeing Hanuman thus retreat wicked Indrajit went to the Nikumbhila temple for the purpose of performing a sacrifice.

CHAPTER LIX

LAKSHMANA'S ADVICE

Here Rama hearing of a tremendous din of battle, told Jamvuvan, "My noble friend! just listen to the mighty noise of clanging of arms. Perhaps Hanuman is somewhere engaged in

some arduous feat. Just go and help him with your army."

Thereupon the Riksha lord with his army proceeded towards the western gate, and saw Hanuman coming back with the Vanaras. The Vanaras were gasping for breath from exhaustion. On his way Hanuman came across the Bhalluka army dark as clouds. Hanuman asked them to stop and appearing before Rama said, "O Rama! when we were engaged in fighting, Indrajit executed Sita in our presence. We have come to inform you with a sorrowful heart."

At this cruel news, Rama fell unconscious like an uprooted tree, and the Vanaras immediately came near him and began to sprinkle lotus-scented water on him. Then Lakshmana took him up on his arms and broke forth in sorrow:

"You are pious and saintly in character, but your piety could not protect you from a series of misfortunes; hence virtue is of little use. Happiness of created beings is something tangible, and since piety or virtue is not so, virtue cannot be the means of happiness. Nature is happy without any morality: so created beings can also be happy without any religion whatsoever.[1] Thus religion cannot lead to happiness.

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1 This is the eternal problem of Ethics. Problem of evil is an intensely complicated problem of Metaphysics. Here Lakshmana argues like a modern positivist in whose philosophy virtue is merely an abstract idea, a mere convention. Kant says there is no logical necessity between Virtue and Happiness, but the synthetic notion is the result of the belief in God.

Had it been otherwise, you could not be put into such troubles. If you maintain that sin is the cause of our sufferings, then Ravana would have been condemned to perdition and you could not have been miserable like this. To speak the truth, seeing the happiness of the sinful and sufferings of the virtuous, the old cant that virtue leads to happiness and vice to miseries appears, now to be disproved. On the contrary vice leads to happiness and virtue to sufferings. Or if it be true that virtue leads to happiness and vice to pain then let the virtuous be happy and the vicious miserable. But when we find *that the virtuous suffer infinitely, and the* vicious prosper beyond expectation, it appears that vice and virtue are idle conventions. O hero! if sin be considered to be an act, and if the sinner be destroyed by sin, then with the completion of the act, vice will be destroyed, so what is self-destroyed, how can you destroy again? Or if one is destroyed by another's act which may be considered to be the former's fate, then sin attaches to fate, but not to the agent, for the agent is not in any way stained by it, for the agent is not the cause of another's death. O worshipful lord! religion or virtue is an insensate thing, it has no reason or speech. Even if you admit its existence, how can it find out its object of revenge? In fact, it there were any religion at all, then you would not have been unhappy; since you are suffering, there is no such thing as religion or virtue. Religion is thus quite an insignificant thing and unable to achieve its end. It is weak at the time of action:

it must depend upon one's endeavours. It has not the least power to secure one's happiness. In my opinion, it is not at all proper to stick to that impotent religion. Further see, if virtue be a quality attained by endeavours, then give up virtue or religion and take to manliness, and put forth your endeavours. O hero! if you consider truth to be religion, then king Dasaratha has fallen from virtue by not redeeming his pledge for investing you with the crown, and for that he died, then why did you not fulfil his vow ?[1] Or, if industry or virtue be alone covetable, then Indra would not have performed a sacrifice after slaying Maharshi Viswapa. In fact for the destruction of the enemy both valour and religion are necessary. Men for the attainment of their objects, pursue both of them. This is my opinion, but having renounced that religion which secures one's object of desire, you have dispensed with all religiousness. As rivers and streams have their origin in the mountain, from endeavours[2] all virtue originate. All the acts of a weak purposeless[3] man become scattered, and vanish like the waters of a shallow stream in summer. In truth, purpose is endeav-

1 i. e., by getting himself coronated.

2 Lakshmana is now shifting his point; he now argues for valour as well as for virtue.

3 In the original: all religion comes from wealth accumulated in various quarters. Here wealth or Artha seems to me to be endeavours that secure our objects of desire.

our.[1] He who has weatlh has friends and relations. He is a man who has wealth on earth. He who has wealth is learned, powerful, intelligent and heroic, and the most accomplished of all persons. I have just now mentioned to you the evils produced by the absence of wealth, and I cannot understand, why you despised wealth by renouncing the throne. He who has wealth has necessity for virtue and desire, everything is favourable to him. A poor man desirous of wealth cannot attain wealth without industry and manliness Pleasure, desire, pride, anger, peace and conquest of self is under the influence of wealth. The efforts of a saintly person that fail for want of wealth remain obscure like planets in a cloudy day. O hero! when you went into exile in obedience to your father's wishes, the Rakshasas carried off your wife. Just arise, I shall remove by my own valour all the sufferings caused by Indrajit. Rise up; why do you forget your own glory? This day in revenge of worshipful Janaki's death I shall reduce Lanka to ruins with all its splendour and wealth."

When Lakshmana devoted to Rama was consoling the latter, there appeared Vibhishana surrounded by his four counsellors of collyrium

1 Subsequent sentences show that here Artha means wealth, so "purpose is endeavour" may also be set down as wealth is power. The poet here describes the advantages of wealth in society, which is certainly out of mark in this place.

hue. He found Rama overwhelmed with shame and remorse, lying on the lap of Lakshmana, and the Vanaras were shedding tears standing round him.

Seeing Vibhishana, Lakshmana said, "O Arya ! Hanuman has witnessed Sita being executed by Indrajit. Worshipful Rama has swooned at that news."

Then Vibhishana, interrupting Lakshmana's speech, said to Rama, "O royal master ! what Hanuman has said seems to be absurd like drying up the sea. I am fully aware of the evil intentions which Ravana bears towards Sita, and for that he will never put her to death. I repeatedly requested him to return Janaki for his own good, but he didn't pay any heed to my words. Not to speak of putting Janaki to death, nobody can see her eyes. The one whom Indrajit has destroyed occasioning the Vanaras' grief, must be "Magic Sita". This day wicked Indrajit will perform a sacrifice at Nikumbhila for the attainment of his object of desire. The god of fire, with the other gods, will appear there. If Indrajit succeeds in performing the sacrifice, then he will be quite invincible in battle. His intention is to prevent the Vanaras from interfering with that sacrifice ; therefore he has bewildered the Vanaras by producing this illusion. Let us now proceed with the army to Nikumbhila before he finishes the sacrifice. Rama ! don't be overwhelmed with grief just for nothing. The whole Vanara army has been dejected with sorrow at your plight. We shall

now proceed with the army to Nikumbhila. Send Lakshmana with us. This hero will be able to interrupt Indrajit's sacrifice. If Indrajit does not succeed in performing the sacrifice, he will be slain by us. Lakshmana's sharp arrows will drink his blood like a ravenous bird of prey. As Indra, the king of the gods, employs his thunder for the destruction of the enemies, so engage Lakshmana for this work. O hero! it is not proper to waste further time for the destruction of Indrajit. Whenever he can finish his sacrifice, he becomes invincible. Hence even the gods become afraid of their lives."

CHAPTER LX

LAKSHMANA STARTS

Rama heard Vibhishana's words, but on account of intense grief could not make out anything. Then after reviving himself a little, he asked Vibhishana in the presence of all, "Please repeat what you have just now said ; I want to hear them again."

Thereupon Vibhishana said, 'O Rama! I carried out your order promptly about stationing the troops in groves and woods. Now the Vanara army has been stationed in all directions and the generals have drawn them in battle array. You are grieving for nothing. This pains our heart ; just banish your sorrow. Be energetic and cheerful. If you wish to destroy the Rakshasas and recover Janaki, then listen to a word of mine. Wicked Indrajit has now

repaired to Nikumbhila; let Lakshmana proceed with us for the destruction of Indrajit. By the boon of Brahma the Brahmasira weapon and magic horse are within his reach. Now he has repaired with his army to Nikumbhila. If he can perform the Abhichara[1] sacrifice today, then know it for certain that we shall all be destroyed by him. Lord Brahma, the Grandsire of creation said to him, "If on arriving at Nikumbhila, you fail to complete the Abhichara sacrifice, and if anybody at that sacrifice attacks you with arms, then your death is certain. Rama! this is what Brahma has ordained as the means of his death. Now employ heroic Lakshmana for that task. If Indrajit dies by arrows, then Ravana with his friends and dependants will surely be destroyed."

Rama then replied, "O Vibhishana! I am fully aware of the magical powers of that formidable Rakshasa. I also know that Brahmasira weapon is within his grasp, and he can even defeat the gods and render them senseless, on account of Brahma's blessings. I also know that as the sun becomes invisible on account of heavy clouds in the sky, so Indrajit becomes invisible in his chariot."

Having said all this to Vibhishana, turning to glorious Lakshmana he said, "My boy! you are

1 That sacrifice by the performance of which one can accomplish the particular object of his desire. In the Rigveda itself various kinds of sacrifices have been mentioned, each one bearing a separate name.

a great hero ; go and destroy that sorcerer with heroic Hanuman, Jamvuvan and other generals. Vibhishana can detect what is illusion ; so he with his four counsellors will accompany you."

Thereupon mighty Lakshmana in obedience to Rama's orders took up an excellent bow, and covered his body with an armour. He carried the bow in his left hand, his quiver was full of arrows, and a sword was slung from his back.

Having touched Rama's feat, Lakshmana cheerfully said, "This day my shafts, discharged from the bow, will fall upon Lanka as the ducks and larks fall upon a tank. Surely, my arrows will pierce that formidable Rakshasa today."

With these words Lakshmana bowed to Rama and wheeled round him. Rama blessed him for victory.

The Rakshasa chief, Vibhishana, with his four counsellors and Hanuman with thousands of Vanaras followed him. Lakshmana on his way found the Bhalluka troops gathered in one place, and on advancing further he found the Rakshasa army drawn up in battle array. Till then Indrajit did not enter Nikumbhila. In order to destroy that sorcerer in the manner as predicted by Brahma, Lakshmana waited there with Angada, Vibhishana and Hanuman. The Rakshasas were armed with various kinds of bright arms that glittered in the light, and was frightful to look at. The place was densely packed with their chariots decorated with flags and staffs. And as one enters a deep forest or

into the realm of darkness, so heroic Lakshmana entered the line of the Rakshasa army.

In the meantime, Vibhishana for the injury of the enemy said, "O hero! the dark line of army that you find in front of you is the Rakshasa army. Just engage the troops against them. Let them disperse the Rakshasa army and when the Rakshasas will be scattered in different directions, then Indrajit will surely be seen. And so long as the Abhichara sacrifice is not completed, attack the Rakshasa army vigorously. Villainous Indrajit is the terror of the world. He is vicious, cruel and a sorcerer. O hero! just compass his destruction."

Thereupon, Lakshmana began to fight. The Vanaras and the Bhallukas rushed towards the Rakshasas with trees in their hands. The Rakshasas too in order to destroy them advanced with sharp weapons as swords, Tomaras, arrows and Saktis. A heavy fight ensued between the two parties. Lanka became resounded with heroic roars. The sky was overcast with various kinds of arms and trees discharged by the two armies. The Rakshasas frightened the Vanaras by their prowess so the Vanaras in their turn caused panic to the Rakshasas.

In the meantime, Indrajit finding his army thus worsted and dejected, stood up even though the Abhichara sacrifice at Nikumbhila was not completed, and issued forth in great rage through the dense row of trees at Nikumbhila. He got upon his well-furnished chariot. His

colour was a collyrium dye, his eyes were red, and he held a formidable bow and fearful arrows in his hands. At that time that grim-looking warrior looked like Death himself. The Rakshasas seeing Indrajit again ascending his chariot mustered their courage to fight against Lakshmana. A terrible fight commenced. Hanuman struck Indrajit with a tree and began to destroy the Rakshasas in great wrath. The Rakshasas began to strike him with their arms.

Meanwhile, Indrajit witnessing the great struggle between Hanuman and the Rakshasas asked his charioteer to take him where Hanuman was fighting, for if he was neglected he would compass destruction of the whole Rakshasa army. The charioteer drove near Hanuman, and Indrajit began to strike him with his sharp weapons. Hanuman being thus struck by Indrajit addressing the latter said, "You fool! if you are really a hero, then fight fairly. You won't be able to escape with your life. Come, fight a duel with me. Thou art the foremost warrior amongst the Rakshasas. Just stand the onslaught this day."

In the meantime, Vibhishana said to Lakshmana, "O hero! that warrior who is the conqueror of Indra is seated on the chariot and is about to slay Hanuman. Now destroy him with a fatal shaft."

At that Lakshmana began to look at mighty Indrajit repeatedly.

CHAPTER LXI

VIBHISHANA'S TREACHERY

Then Vibhishana hurriedly proceeded with Lakshmana. After going some distance Vibhishana, pointing to Lakshmana the sacrificial ground of Nikumbha and a huge, dark banyan tree, said, "Lakshmana, on that spot Indrajit, after gratifying the supernatural spirits, commences his fight and, on account of that Abhichara sacrifice, he becomes invisible to others. The hero has not yet reached the banyan tree ; just destroy with your flaming arrows his chariot with the charioteer. Thereupon Lakshmana stood, stretching his bow, Indrajit was seen seated in a glittering car glowing like fire.

At the sight of that great warrior, Lakshmana said, "O Rakshasa ! I challenge you to battle ; just fight with me."

Then Indrajit seeing Vibhishana there broke forth in stern words, "Ah, you fool ! you have grown old being born in this place. You are my father's own brother ; now tell me, how being an uncle do you think of doing mischief to me, your own nephew ? O villainous renegade ![1] friendship, pride in birth, feeling of

1 Indrajit reproaches Vibhishana with this treachery in noble and spirited words. Vibhishanas are too plentiful in the annals of this country. But for them the history of India would have been otherwise. Indrajit calls Vibhishana a renegade who has revolted against his religion. In the

brotherhood and religious sentiments do not govern thy conduct. You are no doubt the most wretched of all despicable creatures, and an object of contempt amongst the noble-minded people, since you could take to another's service by renouncing your own kith and kin. What a difference between serving one's own people and serving a stranger! You can't understand the great difference, because you are a fool. If a stranger be accomplished, and one's own people be without any accomplishments whatsoever, still a stranger is always a stranger and one's own people always continue to be one's own. He who abandons his own party and joins another, is doomed to ruin (by the other party) after the destruction of his own party.[1] O Rakshasa! how could you display so much anxiety and cruel zeal to destroy your own people?"

Then Vibhishana replied, "O prince! are you not aware of my nature? Then why do you waste your breath in vain? You are anything but noble. You should give up this naughtiness out of respect for your uncle. Though I am born amongst the cruel Rakshasas, I have been endowed with the prime quality of humanity, and I never delight in any cruel deeds, nor have I any proclivity for vicious acts. Tell me, my boy, may a brother not renounce a vicious brother? He who is vicious and unrighteous

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Gita itself we find the noble injunction. "It is better to die in one's faith that embracing that of another."

1 Indrajit's words should be written in letters of gold.

should be promptly discarded like a snake in hand. He who steals another's wealth or abducts another's wife is ever to be abandoned like a burning house. He who is engaged in stealing others' wives and properties and is always a cause of anxiety to his own people is doomed to destruction in no time.

"Now, massacre of the saints, hostility with the gods, pride, illness and adverse circumstances are about to compass my brother Ravana's ruin. As clouds darken a hill, so all these evils have overcast all his noble qualities. My boy! this is the real cause of abandoning Ravana. Now this city of Lanka and Ravana will be destroyed in no time. You are naughty, reckless and young; your end is nigh. So abuse me in any manner you like. You have now been entrapped in great danger on account of the harsh expressions formerly employed towards me by you. Now it is difficult for you to reach the root of the banyan tree. Fight this day with Lakshmana and there is no escape from his hands today. You will perform your services to the gods,[1] reporting to the abode of death after the dissolution of your body. Display your prowess utmost by discharging all your formidable shafts; but never will you get back with your life in you."

At these words Indrajit grew furious. He had swords and other weapons in his hands. That Death-like hero got upon a well-decorated chariot yoked with black steeds, and taking a

1 i. e., the sacrifice.

strong formidable bow in his hands, he espied heroic Lakshmana mounted on the back of Hanuman like the sun risen on the summit of the Udaya hill (the mountain of dawn).

At the sight of them Indrajit angrily said, "Witness my prowess today. Bear my shaft that will be poured upon you like incessant rain from the clouds. I shall consume you all with my flaming arrows as fire reduces cotton to ashes. I shall despatch you all to the abode of death with my lance, sword, arrows, Saktis and other arms. When I shall set about fighting who amongst you will be able to stand my quick shafts and heroic roars like the rumbling of clouds? O Lakshmana! don't you remember that in that night attack you two brothers along with other warriors who were your assistants fell unconscious when struck with my sharp arrows? I am like an angry serpent. Since you are engaged in fighting with me, you will surely meet with death."

Then Lakshmana boldly replied, "What you think so easy in words is really difficult in execution. He is intelligent who can achieve his end by his efforts. But you are a fool. In what is extremely arduous to attain you think yourself successful simply by your words. What you did, remaining concealed in the sky, is not the way with a hero, but with a thief. Now do I stand before thee; just witness my prowess. What is the good of idle vauntings?"

Thereupon the heroic Indrajit stretched his bow and discharged sharp arrows at Lakshmana.

Those shafts deadly as venomous snakes struck Lakshmana with a hissing sound. Lakshmana being deeply wounded and being gory all over his body looked like a smokeless column of fire.

Then Indrajit gloating over this heroic deed of his, addressing Lakshmana, said, "You Lakshmana ! these fatal arrows this day will rob you of your life. Vultures and eagles will feed upon your body. You are mean and are the worst of the Kshatriyas. You are devoted to the villainous Rama. He will find you killed this day by my arrows. He will today see your head severed, armour battered, and the bow slip off your hand."

Thereupon, Lakshmana angrily replied, "You braggard ! why do you waste your breath in vain ? Prove your valour by your deeds. Without displaying your prowess in action why do you brag ? Now perform thing so that I can take your words to be true. O Rakshasa ! just see that without using any harsh expressions towards you and bragging, I shall slay you even now."

Saying this, the heroic Lakshmana discharged five arrows with great force at Indrajit's breast. Those shafts like fiery snakes fell upon Indrajit's breast and began to glow like the rays of the sun. At this Indrajit grew highly enraged and struck Lakshmana with three sharp arrows.

Being anxious for victory, they commenced a fierce fight. They were like two planets (closing upon each other) in the sky, like

Indra and Vritrasura and like two lions in the forest, fighting a deadly fight against each other.

Then Lakshmana breathed heavily in anger like a snake and discharged arrows against Indrajit. Indrajit was greatly alarmed by the twanging of Lakshmana's bow, his face pale, and started rapidly towards him. Seeing Lakshmana in that condition, Vibhishana said, "O hero! I find Indrajit's face to be darkened and other evil omens too. His end must be near. Be prompt in his destruction."

Thereupon the heroic Lakshmana began to shoot sharp arrows at Indrajit. Indrajit for a while, was stunned by these thunder-like shafts. His senses were benumbed. After that, he came near Lakshmana and said, "You fool! don't you remember the prowess I displayed on the first night of my attack. At that time both you and Rama were tied by Nagapasa. Then how have you ventured to fight again? Perhaps you have forgotten that both of you lay unconscious at that time. Surely you now wish for your death. If you did not witness my valour on that night, wait, you will see it just now."

Saying this, Indrajit struck Lakshmana with seven sharp arrows, Hanuman with ten and Vibhishana with a hundred arrows.

Lakshmana defied him with a smile and said, "You Rakshasa! your arrows are quite insipid and light. They have produced a pleasant sensation in my body. In fact such blunt shafts

are never discharged by any great hero in battle, nor any warrior like you comes to fight of his own accord."

With these words Lakshmana discharged sharp arrows at Indrajit in anger. Indrajit's armour was broken in pieces and they fell like showers of stars within the chariot. The whole body of Indrajit was literally covered with wounds and with his body bathed in blood, he looked like the morning sun. Then Indrajit shot sharp arrows at Lakshmana and Lakshmana's armour was broken in pieces. The one struck and the other warded off the attack. Both were exhausted and both began to breathe heavily. The fight thickened at last. Both became wounded and drenched with blood. Both were skilled in fight. Both began to strike each other with sharp arrows. Both were eager for victory. Armour and flags of both the warriors were cut, and blood streamed forth from both of them. As deep, dark clouds pour down rain, so those two warriors began to discharge incessant arrows with heroic roars. The sky became covered with their arrows. They fought for a long time, but none of them was vanquished or tired. Their skill in the use of arms was uniformly wonderful, quickness quite amazing, and there was even beauty in that. Their heroic roars like thunderclaps which were repeatedly heard, struck terror into other people's hearts. Their arrows after wounding each of them stuck deep into the earth. Some arrows were cut in the sky and their fragments fell to the ground. At last, the

battle-field was covered with arrows as the sacrificial ground is covered with the Kusa grass. The warriors with their bodies red with blood, looked like two Kinsuka trees in blossom and with arrows struck in their bodies they looked like two hills with trees growing on them. With their gory bodies they appeared like two burning flames.

CHAPTER LXII

THE FALL OF INDRAJIT

Indrajit and Lakshmana fought as two infuriated elephants for victory. In the meantime, Vibhishana appeared on the scene to witness the fight and after stretching his bow he began to strike the opponents with sharp arrows. As the thunder cleaves the mountain, so his flaming arrows dispersed the Rakshasas, and his followers too with maces and lances began to create havoc amongst the Rakshasas. At that time, Vibhishana being surrounded by his followers looked like an adult elephant in the midst of young elephant calves.

Then, to encourage the Vanara soldiers Vibhishana said, "Hear me, warriors. This Indrajit is the only hope of Ravana, and his army alone is now surviving. Then why are you so indifferent and lazy? If this wicked Indrajit is slain, then only Ravana will remain. You see Prahasta, Nikumbha, Kumbhakarna, Kumbha, Dhumraksha, Jamvumali, Mahamali, Tikshnavega. Ashniprabha, Suptagna, Yajnakupa,

Vajradranshtra, Sampadi, Vikata, Avighna, Japana, Manda, Praghasa, Prajangha, Gangha, Agnikata, Durdharsha, Rasmiketu, Vidyujjihva, Dvijihva, Surya-satru, Chakramali,, Kampana, Satyavastu, Devantaka and Narantaka and others have met with their death at your hands. You have crossed the ocean, now come over this little pond. He is the only one whom you have to conquer. Indrajit is my nephew, and so it is not proper for me to kill him ; still I shall for Rama renounce all affection and kindness and shall kill him today. I wish for his death, but tears have blinded my eyes ; so Lakshmana will destroy him. O Vanaras, attack in a body the followers of Indrajit."

The Vanaras were greatly cheered up by the famous Vibhishana's words and began to wave their tails. They shouted in joy as the peacocks do at the sight of clouds. In the meantime, Jamvuvan arrived there with the Bhalluka army. The Bhallukas began to fight with trees and stones and with the assistance of their teeth. The Rakshasas too began to strike the Bhallukas with swords, axes, lances, Patisas and other weapons. At that time, Indrajit again ran after Lakshmana and a severe fight ensued. Both of them became hid behind the arrows discharged by them like the sun and the moon behind the clouds. At that time none could mark their handling of the bows and arrows, so swift were their hands. The sky became covered with their arrows, and everything grew dark for that. In that darkness one's own party and the antago-

nist's party could not be distinguished. The sky was covered with uninterrupted darkness.

At that time the sun went down. Everything became enveloped in immense darkness. Blood flowed in streams, and the ravenous birds of prey began to scream. The wind was hushed and the fire was about to be extinguished. The Gandharvas and the Charanas were stunned by the sight. The holy saints prayed for the welfare of the world saying, "Swasti, Swasti."

In the meantime Lakshmana pierced four black steeds of Indrajit adorned with golden harnesses. Then aiming at the charioteer, Lakshmana discharged a thunder-like Bhalla. The Bhalla resounded the sky (as soon as the bowstring was stretched) with its noise, and the head of the charioteer at once fell severed from the body. Thereupon Indrajit assumed the office of the charioteer. At that time that sight produced a great curiosity in the sight-seers. When Indrajit was doing the work of the charioteer arrows were showered upon him and upon his steeds. At that time Lakshmana finding Indrajit roaming about quite fearlessly, began to shoot fast volleys of arrows. Indrajit's zeal for fight was almost gone. Gradually he grew morose and sad. At that sight the Vanara leaders began to praise Lakshmana highly. Then Pramarthi, Rabhasa, Sarabha, and Gandhamadana fell with great violence upon the steeds of Indrajit. The horses thus overpowered began to vomit blood. Then those Vanaras after slaying those four horses returned to Lakshmana. Thus

were destroyed the horses and the chariot of Indrajit. He got down from his chariot and rushed on foot towards Lakshmana, discharging arrows all the while. Lakshmana too began to strike Indrajit repeatedly with his shafts.

Indrajit stood on the ground. He was burning with rage and with his own effulgent energy. Those two heroes fought like two wild elephants eager for victory. Armies on both sides were engaged in a heavy fight and not a single one of them deserted his post. In fact, all then gathered together. In the meantime, Indrajit cheering up the Rakshasas, said, "O Rakshasas! everything is now enveloped in deep darkness and in this darkness friends cannot, at all, be distinguished from foes. In order to bewilder the Vanara troops fight now bravely. I shall in the meantime, come back with my chariot. Just see that the Vanaras may not obstruct me in entering the city by keeping myselt engaged with them."

Thus saying, Indrajit gave the Vanaras the slip and entered Lanka and got upon a well-equipped chariot. This chariot was furnished with swords, Prasas and arrows, and was yoked with excellent horses. It was driven by an expert charioteer, capable of giving good counsels. Indrajit under the spell of Death came out of Lanka, being surrounded by the Rakshasa warriors, and with the help of swift horses soon arrived on the field of battle. Lakshmana, Vibhishana and the Vanaras seeing him again

upon a chariot became greatly astonished and could not but praise his swiftness.

Indrajit then began to rout the Vanara army. The Vanaras being unable to bear his irresistible shafts sought protection of Lakshmana, as the created beings seek protection of Brahma, the lord of the creation. Then Lakshmana flared up in rage like fire, and with quick hands cut down the bow and arrows of Indrajit. Indrajit promptly took up another bow and put string to it. Lakshmana cut that also with three arrows and struck Indrajit on the breast with five shafts like dreadful snakes. Those arrows after striking Indrajit fell to the ground like bloody serpents. Indrajit began to vomit blood from that blow. Then taking up a strong bow, Indrajit began to discharge volleys of arrows at Lakshmana. But Lakshmana easily warded off those shafts. This feat of Lakshmana was indeed wonderful. Lakshmana wounded each of the Rakshasas with three shafts and pierced Indrajit all over the body. Indrajit too incessantly discharged volleys of arrows against Lakshmana who cut those arrows in the midway and destroyed Indrajit's charioteer with a Bhalla weapon. His horses being deprived of the charioteer began to wheel round. Then Lakshmana pierced those horses with his arrows. Unable to bear that, Indrajit pierced Lakshmana with ten shafts. But those glittering thunder-like arrows broke against the gold-like armour of Lakshmana.

Thereupon Indrajit thinking Lakshmana's

armour to be impenetrable struck Lakshmana on the forehead with three sharp arrows. At that time Lakshmana looked like a hill with three peaks. Then being pained by them, Lakshmana struck Indrajit's face adorned with ear-rings, with five arrows. Those two heroes were bleeding all over their bodies, and thereby appeared like two Kinsuka trees in blossom.

Then Indrajit in great rage struck Vibhishana on the face with three arrows, and struck each one of the Vanara leaders with his shafts. Struck with arrows, Vibhishana was greatly enraged and he destroyed Indrajit's horses by a blow of his mace. Indrajit's charioteer too was slain. Then Indrajit got down from the chariot and hurled a formidable weapon at Vibhishana. Lakshmana seeing that formidable weapon coming towards Vibhishana with great speed, cut that in pieces with his sharp arrows. Then Vibhishana in rage struck Indrajit on the chest with five thunder-like arrows. Those arrows pierced Indrajit and with blood appeared like bloody snakes.

Indrajit bore great grudge against his uncle. He took up a formidable shaft given by Yama, Heroic Lakshmana too took a counter-arrow. That arrow was given by the irresistible Kuvera to Lakshmana in a dream. The gods and the Asuras could not stand that arrow. Strong bows being drawn by the powerful bolt-like arms of those two mighty heroes made a screeching noise like cranes, and arrows being fixed to the bow-strings began to glow with a (fierce) beauty.

Then those two arrows being discharged from their strings coursed through the sky, lighting it up with their glow. They collided in their flight and a fierce flame was generated from their friction. Then those two shafts, like two big planets, fell to the ground, broken into a hundred pieces. Thereupon, both Indrajit and Lakshmana stood ashamed and burned with rage. Then Lakshmana discharged his Varuna weapon but Indrajit frustrated that wonderful weapon by the Rudra weapon, and then to destroy, as it were the three worlds, he took up a fire-arm and hurled it against Lakshmana. Lakshmana cut that in pieces by the Surya weapon. Seeing the fire-weapon thus frustrated he was beside himself with rage, and aimed the sharp Asura arrow at Lakshmana. That was a dreadful shaft. It beat all other weapons. Lakshmana countered that Asura shaft by Maheswara weapon. The fight between those two warriors was quite amazing and dreadful. The rangers of the sky approached Lakshmana and began to witness the fight. The sky grew beautiful with their splendour. At that time the gods and other citizensof heaven with Indra at their head began to protect Lakshmana.

After a time Lakshmana to destroy Indrjit aimed a fiery shaft. That arrow was gold-plated, beautiful and well-made, but dreadful like a snake. In days of yore the king of the gods conquered the Asuras by that arrow, and for this it was worshipped by the gods. The Rakshasas shuddered at the very sight of it. Then the heroic Lakshmana fixed that divine weapon to accomplish his object saying, "O god of the

weapon! if Rama be unrivalled, pious and truthful, then slay Indrajit."

With these words Lakshmana discharged that shaft by drawing the bow up to the ear. That shaft at once severed Indrajit's head adorned with ear-rings. The big head fell from the trunk. Indrajit's body clad in armour rolled in dust and the bow fell from his hands. Then a great shout rose from the Vanaras as once it rose from the gods after the destruction of Vritrasura. The gods, Rishis, Gandharvas and the nymphs in the sky repeatedly shouted victory to Lakshmana. The Rakshasa army dispersed in different directions, and most of them ran away throwing off their arms. Some of them entered Lanka in panic, some of them jumped into the sea and some hid themselves in mountains and hills. At that time none dared to remain on the field of battle. As the rays of the sun vanish, when the sun is set, so all the Rakshasas made themselves scarce after the fall of Indrajit. Indrajit was lying on the battle-field like the sun deprived of its light or like an extinguished flame. All the three worlds became delighted at the death of that cruel villain. Then the gods in heaven blew trumpets of victory and nymphs began to dance in joy. The sky grew clear, the wind began to blow free from dust, and flowers were rained from above. All the creatures became delighted at the death of that terror to the three worlds and the Brahmanas breathed again as if their fever was gone. Then Vibhishana, Hanuman and Jamvuvan began to praise Lakshmana for

the death of Indrajit and greeted him repeatedly in joy. The Vanaras began to roar in delight and began to brandish their tails. Every one was speaking of Lakshmana's victory, and many of them embraced one another in joy and began to talk to Lakshmana's victory, and about Lakshmana's valour. The gods too were immensely delighted at that heroic feat of Lakshmana, a dear friend of theirs.

Chapter LXIII

RAMA HEARS THE NEWS

Lakshmana was bathed in blood. He felt extremely happy at heart for the destruction of Indrajit, but for bodily pain he rested his two hands on the shoulders of Vibhishana and Hanuman, and appeared before Rama and Sugriva, and going round Rama Lakshmana stood before the former, as Upendra stands before Indra. Vibhishana first spoke about Indrajit's death, saying, "O king! the great hero Lakshmana has slain Indrajit this day." Rama became exceedingly delighted at this news and said, "Brother Lakshmana! I am extremely glad. You have performed an impossible task. Since Indrajit is dead, we can now reckon ourselves as victorious."

With these words Rama embraced Lakshmana forcibly took him upon his lap, and began to kiss his head. Rama repeatedly gazed at Lakshmana's face in deep affection and love.

Lakshmana was wounded all over the body; he was exhausted and was breathing heavily from exhaustion and pain. Rama kissed Lakshmana's head and passed his hand repeatedly all over Lakshmana's body to soothe his pain. Rama again spoke forth in joy, "My boy! you have accomplished a very arduous feat this day. We may look on the death of Indrajit as the destruction of Ravana himself. Today I feel myself as victorious. Indrajit was the only stay of Ravana, and due to good fortune you have succeeded in cutting off his right hand. Hanuman and Vibhishana have done a great deed. In three days my enemies have been destroyed. This day I am enemyless. Ravana hearing of his son's death will come out with a huge army and then I shall slay him by a fierce attack. Lakshmana! thou art my master. Henceforth with your help neither Sita nor the earth will remain inaccessible to me."

After that Rama addressing Sushena said, "Sushena! just see that Lakshmana is soon cured and freed from all dirt. Please look to it. Heroic Riksha and the Vanara soldiers have also been wounded; carefully attend them, so that they may rally soon."

Thereupon Sushena made Lakshmana smell a medicine and he was at once cured of all pain. His pain was gone and its sensation stopped.

Sushena then treated Vibhishana and other Vanara warriors. Lakshmana recovered soon. He was free from all complaints and became cheerful. Rama, Sugriva, Vibhishana, Jamvuvan and others seeing Lakshmana thus restored became exceedingly glad.

CHAPTER LXIV

RAVANA RECEIVES THE NEWS

Here the ministers of Ravana hearing of Indrajit's death hurried to Ravana and said, "O royal sire ! Lakshmana with the help of Vibhishana has slain your son in the presence of all. Indrajit has gone to the blessed region of the heroes after fighting heavily against Lakshmana."

Ravana at once fell unconscious at this cruel news of his son's death. When he regained his sense, he became overwhelmed with grief. His mind became restless. Ravana then began to lament in grief, "Alas, my boy ! you conquered Indra, but how could you be slain by Lakshmana's arrows ? O foremost of heroes ! what to speak of Lakshmana, in your wrath you could pierce even Death himself with arrows, and could crush the peaks of the Mandara into atoms. When you could die, Yama, the god of death, appears to be powerful to me. Who dies in the service of his master, repairs to heaven ; this is the way with the great warriors on earth. Surely

you have repaired to heaven. This day the Suras and the Asuras will sleep in peace, seeing Indrajit thus slain. Without Indrajit my eyes appear to have lost their vision. Today in my harem I shall hear the cries of the Rakshasa women like that of the cow-elephants in a mountain cave. Alas, my boy! whither hast thou gone, leaving the throne, Lanka, Rakshasas, your wife and myself? O hero! you were to perform my funeral rites, whereas I shall have to perform that of yours! Alas! Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva and others are still alive; whither hast thou gone without removing those thorns in our sides?"

When the Rakshasa king, Ravana, was thus sorrowing for the death of his son, violent rage possessed his mind. By nature he was of an irritable temper. This grief kindled his rage as the rays of the sun in summer make the sun too hot. He was repeatedly yawning in anger and as (in the days of yore) fire broke out from Vritasura's mouth, so fire seemed to issue from the cavity of his mouth. He was extremely aggrieved and enraged at the death of his son. He surveyed the situation and decided to put Janaki to death.

His eyes naturally red, became inflamed and glowed with rage, and his visage became fearful like that of angry Rudra. And burning tears fell from his eyes as drops of oil trickle down a burning lamp. He repeatedly bit his lips, and gnashed his teeth. At that time, Ravana appeared like Death himself ready to destroy the

world. He repeatedly cast his looks around. The Rakshasas could not approach him through fear.

Then Ravana encouraging the Rakshasas for battle said, "I propitiated God Svayambhu by my austere penance for a thousand years. Now, by His blessings I have been rendered indestructible by the gods and Asuras in battle. Svayambhu gave me an armour glittering like the sun. It cannot be penetrated even by thunder. When I shall put on that armour and get upon my chariot, then even Indra will not dare to approach me. O Rakshasas! fetch with a flourish of trumpets that formidable bow and arrow which God Svayambhu gave me in the war between the gods and the Asuras. 'With that I shall destroy Rama and Lakshmana this day."

Then, that formidable warrior for the destruction of Janaki said, "You see, Indrajit in order to mislead the Vanaras, produced a magic illusion about the destruction of Sita. What was merely an illusion I shall carry into real execution. Janaki is devoted to the non-Kshatriya Rama, I shall put her to death."

With these words Ravana took up a sword blue as the sky and hurried towards the Asoka forest. His wife and ministers followed him. At that sight the Rakshasas said amongst themselves, "Rama and Lakshmana will be greatly frightened at the sight of this formidable hero. He, in his anger, conquered hundreds of kings and destroyed thousands of enemies. By

his prowess he enjoys all the wealth of the world."

Ravana was hurrying towards the Asoka forest and his well-wishers were dissuading him from the foul act of killing a woman. Ravana hied towards Janaki as the Rahu rushes towards the star Rohini.

Sita was guarded by the Rakshasis in the Asoka forest. She espied from a distance that Ravana, without listening to any dissuading voice, was rushing towards her, with an upraised sword. At that sight she broke forth in grief, "Alas! when this wicked villain is coming towards me with an uplifted sword, surely he will then slay this helpless soul. I am devoted to my husband, but he repeatedly tempted me to be his wife, but I have warded him off every time. Now being overwhelmed with grief and rage he will surely put me to death for my refusal. Or it might be that this non-Aryan in order to possess me has destroyed Rama and Lakshmana. Immediately before this the Rakshasas were proclaiming their victory with loud roars. I have just now heard their roars. Alas! Rama and Lakshmana have lost their lives just for me or it might be that being unable to slay Rama and Lakshmana, in sorrow for his son's death, he has come to put me to death. Alas! I was foolish enough not to have listened to Hanuman's words. If then I left the place on his back without waiting for my husband's victory, then there wouldn't have been any occasion to rue. I could have been happy in my husband's lap.

"Alas! when Kausalya, the mother of her only son, will hear of this, her heart will burst in grief. She will then remember everything about her son, his birth, childhood, and youth. She will in despair then enter into fire or water. Cursed be that wicked and unchaste Kubja Manthara, for worshipful Kausalya will suffer thus."

Then gentle Suparswa, the wise counsellor of Ravana, seeing Janaki in distress like the star Rohini fallen into the grip of a bad planet in the absence of the moon, repeatedly dissuading Ravana said, "O king! thou art brother to Kuvera, how could you banish all righteousness to kill a woman? O hero, you have taken to family life, its preparatory stage by practising austerity and penance and by finishing the Vedas in the house of the preceptor. I can't understand how you could decide to kill a woman. Janaki is a beauty, wait till Rama's death, and give vent to your wrath by taking us with you to battle. Today is the fourteenth day after the full moon, make all preparations this day and set out for victory on the day of the new moon. You are wise and warlike; destroy Rama in battle, then Janaki will surely be yours."

Ravana thus having been persuaded by Suparswa turned back and entered the council-chamber again.

CHAPTER LXV

RAMA'S FIGHT

Ravana entered the council-chamber with a troubled mind. He breathed like a lion and having taken his seat on his excellent throne humbly began, "O Rakshasa warriors! set out this instant with horses and elephants for battle, surround Rama and destroy him. As in the rainy season, the clouds rain incessantly, so shower your arrows in anger upon Rama. He may be wounded this day and tomorrow I shall slay him in the presence of all."

Thereupon, the Rakshasas set out in swift chariots and soon arriving on the field of battle began to strike the Vanaras with lances, Parighas, pattishas and other weapons. The Vanaras too in their turn hurled trees and stones against them. The fight took place in the morning. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas struck one another with various arms. Streams of blood began to flow flooding over the dusts raised by the trampling of the soldiers. Elephants and chariots were its banks, as it were, arrows, and banners bearing the insignia of fish were like trees grown on its banks. Dead bodies floated fast in that stream like logs of wood in water. The Vanaras began to tear the noses and ears of the Rakshasas by biting them with their sharp teeth. As birds alight on a tree, so each Vanara fell upon Rakshasas. The Rakshasas

too began to destroy the Vanaras by striking them hard with maces, Prasasas, swords and axes.

The Vanaras being overpowered by the Rakshasas sought protection of Rama. Heroic Rama, thereupon, entered the Rakshasa army with a bow in his hand. When entering the Rakshasa line, Rama began to smother the Rakshasas with his fiery shafts. Then the Rakshasas could not approach him, as clouds cannot come near the sun. Rama's quickness was quite amazing. Sometimes he was leading the army, sometimes he removed the generals, but none could descry his movements as none can see the wind blowing in the forest. The Rakshasa army was scattered and routed by his arrows. Only this much was then seen but none could find out that hero. As a man cannot find out the vital principle[1] that underlies and governs his sensations of touch, vision and sound, likewise the Rakshasas could not detect the fighting hero. Here Rama destroyed the elephants, there he slew the generals, but Rama could not be seen ! The Rakshasas then blind with anger began to strike all who looked like Rama. Every one was stupefied and bewildered by the Gandharva arms of Rama. At

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1 The energy for which sensation is possible, without which the organs lose their power of sensation as in a dead man. The Sanskrit expression "Jivatma" is distinct and different from true soul within which the latter lies shrouded like some gem wrapped up in a piece of linen, our joys and sorrows belong to "Jivatma" and not to the soul. Jivatma in English psychological term is mind or brain as one may prefer to name.—Translator.

that time none could discern Rama. Sometimes they saw thousands of Ramas in the battle-field, again they saw only one Rama. Sometimes they saw only the restless bow of Rama, but not Rama. At that time all considered Rama's bow as the noose of Death. Within one-eighth part of the day, Rama by his fiery shafts destroyed ten thousand swift chariots, eighteen thousand elephants, fourteen thousand horses with their riders, and two hundred thousand of foot-soldiers. The surviving Rakshasas ran away in fear to Lanka. The battle-field was strewn with the carcasses of horses, elephants, and infantry lying hither and thither. That place appeared quite dreadful like the spot of angry Rudra. Then the Gandharvas, Siddhas and saints praised Rama repeatedly.

Rama addressing Sugriva, Vibhishana, Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Mainda and Dvivida said, "You see, this is the limit to my force of arms and also that of Rudra."

Chapter LXVI

THE PANIC

Then the Rakshasas of Lanka hearing of the destruction of the vast Rakshasa army by Rama, became greatly alarmed. Then thinking of impending danger they grew sad in their hearts. At that time the Rakshasa women, deprived of their husbands and sons, began to lament bitterly, "Alas! why did that grim Rakshasi Surpanakha go to cupid-like Rama?

She deserves death from all points of view. That ugly Rakshasi became enamoured of beautiful Rama. She is without any accomplishment, besides being a shrew. Rama is highly accomplished and sweet-tongued. Why did she grow enamoured of Rama? The Rakshasas are extremely unfortunate. For the destruction of heroic Khara and Dushana this grey-haired, old hag with wrinkled skin did such a ridiculous thing. It is only for her that Ravana has resorted to hostilities with Rama and he abducted Janaki. But instead of winning Janaki, inextinguishable hostility has occured between him and Rama. When this heroic Rama could single-handed slay Viradha Rakshasa, was it not even then a sufficient proof of the prowess of Rama? It was more than sufficient proof of Rama's great prowess when he destroyed fourteen thousand Rakshasas with Khara and Dushana in Janasthana by his fiery shafts. It was enough proof of his valour when he slew angry, roaring Kavandha and Vali of the cloud's hue. Noble Vibhishana gave sufficient well-meaning and pious counsel to Ravana for the welfare of the Rakshasas, but his naughtiness and ignorance made those words unpalatable to him. Alas! Lanka would not have turned into a desert if Ravana only listened to his words. Now, Kumbhakarna, Atikaya and Indrajit have fallen by the hands of the enemy. Will not Ravana be roused to his senses after seeing all these happenings? Each and every Rakshasa woman in Lanka is lamenting her sad cruel

loss, "Where has my son gone? Whither has my brother fled? Where has my husband gone leaving me?" All these cries were being heard rising from the Rakshasa women of each and every house in Lanka. Heroic Rama has destroyed a vast number of chariots, horses, elephants and infantry. It seems as if Rudra, Vishnu, Indra or Death himself has entered Lanka in the form of Rama. Now this city is denuded of all great heroes. We too are in despair as to our lives. There is no end to our troubles. We are now helpless and shedding (idle) tears. Heroic Ravana is proud of the boon received from gods. He does not at all understand that all these great dangers are due to Rama. Rama is resolved on his destruction. There is none amongst the gods, Gandharvas and Pisachas who can now save him. In every fight now-a-days many evil portents are seen. The wise and old people say that these omens predict Ravana's death at the hands of Rama. Formerly, Brahma, being pleased made Ravana indestructible by the gods and Danavas, but when Ravana received that boon, he did not take man into account. Perhaps due to his ill-luck that fatal and formidable man has appeared. Once, the gods being heavily oppressed by Ravana, prayed hard to Brahma. Brahma being pleased with their prayer, said for their welfares. Henceforth, the Rakshasas and the Danavas will live in constant fear of gods. Then the gods worshipped Mahadeva, the god of gods. Being pleased with their prayers, he said, "O gods! you needn't fear. For your

welfare, there will be born a woman for the destruction of the Rakshasas. That Janaki will destroy the Rakshasas as formerly Hunger at the instigation of the gods destroyed the Danavas. For the misdeed of wicked and haughty Ravana our doom is at hand. Rama has seized Lanka like Universal Destruction at the end of a cycle of creation. We do not find anybody in the world who can protect us now. We are now in distress like elephants encircled by a forest-fire. There is no way of our escape. Noble Vibhishana has done the right thing; he has taken shelter under him before all these troubles have proceeded." Thus lamented the Rakshasa women embracing one another's neck and they cried from excessive fear.

Ravana at last heard these piteous cries of the Rakshasa women from every house of Lanka. He heaved a deep sigh and became extremely angry. His eyes became red. He bit his lips repeatedly. In his rage, he appeared formidable like the doomsday-fire. He seemed to scorch the Rakshasas by the fire of his eyes, and he angrily said to Mahodara, Mahaparswa, Virupaksha and others, "O heroes! ask the army to get ready immediately and set out for battle."

Then the great army got ready for fight and performed many auspicious rites for victory, and after singing praise of Ravana, they respectfully stood before Ravana.

Then Ravana angrily said, "O warriors! this day I shall destroy Rama and Lakshmana with my arrows keen as the doomsday-sun. I

shall take revenge for the death of Khara, Dushana, Kumbhakarna and Indrajit this day. The sky and the sea will be covered with my arrows. I shall today churn[1] the Vanaras by my arrows issuing from my bow like the sea. I shall this day smother like elephant the Vanaras.[2] The Vanaras will this day cover the battle-field with their severed heads. Today with one shaft I shall destroy hundreds of Vanaras. I shall today wipe off the tears of those Rakshasas who have lost their brothers and sons, by killing their enemies. Today, I shall offer the flesh of my enemies to the ravenous birds of prey. Get my chariot soon ready and fetch my bow and arrow. Let the surviving hosts of Lanka march with me."

Mahaparswa asked the army leaders to get the army immediately ready. Thereupon the generals mobilised the Rakshasa army. In no time the grim-looking Rakshasa army stood ready for battle. They were equipped with various weapons. Then the generals brought to the field one million chariots, three million elephants, sixty million horses, sixty million of asses and camels. In the meantime, the charioteer brought the chariot. It was full of divine weapons and adorned with gems and protected with golden net-work. It was yoked with eight swift horses. The Rakshasas with wonder stared at the chariot. Ravana got upon that car glittering

1 Molest.

2 The simile is : as the elephant tramples the lotus plants in a lake.

like hundreds of sun. And being surrounded by the Rakshasas he marched with tremendous force, tearing the earth, as it were, by his progress. Bugles, trumpets and conchs blew from all sides. That wicked Ravana, the abductor of Sita, embellished with royal umbrella and chowries came to fight with Rama. All the quarters did resound with a terrific noise. The earth shook at that, and the Vanaras ran away in fear. Mahaparswa, Mahodara, and Virupaksha advanced at the command of Ravana. Ravana proceeded swiftly towards the gate where stood Rama and Lakshmana. The sun grew dim and all the quarters became enveloped with intense darkness. The clouds were raining blood and horses began to stumble. In the meantime a vulture perched on the flag-staff of Ravana. Ravenous vultures and jackals were crying on all sides. The left eye and left arm of Ravana began to throb repeatedly. His face grew pale and his voice grew hoarse. Meteors began to fall from the sky with a thundering noise. Ravana was blind to his impending doom. Therefore, he proceeded towards the battle-field by desregarding all these evil portents.

In the meantime the Vanaras grew excited by the rattling sound of their enemy's chariots. Ravana appeared on the field of battle. A heavy fight ensued between the two sides. The Vanaras were being seriously wounded by the sharp arrows of Ravana. Some lost their heads, some their eyes or ears, some were pierced in their hearts, and some fell suffocated, and some other's sides were split up.

Where Ravana advanced in anger, with eyes revolving in rage, the Vanaras could not stand before his sharp shafts.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE GREAT BATTLE

Gradually, the field of battle became covered with the wounded bodies of the Vanaras. As a burning lamp is unbearable to moths, so the flaming arrows of Ravana were unbearable to the Vanaras. They were smothered by his burning arrows and began to run away with shrieks as elephants do from a forest-fire. But Ravana chased them hotly as the wind chases the clouds. The Vanaras then with their wounded bodies appeared before Rama for protection. *Seeing that Sugriva after stationing Sushena in his place rushed forward with a huge tree*, a number of Vanaras with trees and stones followed him. Appearing on the scene of action Sugriva commenced a heavy fight, and as a strong gale breaks down trees, so he levelled the Rakshasas to the ground like hailstorms upon the birds, he showered stones upon the Rakshasas. Many of the Rakshasas then ran away for fear of their lives.

In the meantime Virupaksha came forward and challenged Sugriva. The Vanaras then stood in readiness at the sight of Virupaksha. Virupaksha began to shower volleys of arrows upon Sugriva. Sugriva then in rage struck down his elephant. Virupaksha jumped on the

ground and rushed towards Sugriva with his sword and shield. Sugriva hurled a big stone at Virupaksha. He moved away a little, the stone missed him and Virupaksha struck Sugriva violently with his sword. Sugriva fell down unconscious but gaining consciousness in a short time dealt a mighty blow on Virupaksha's chest. Virupaksha firmly stood that blow and in his turn cut down Sugriva's armour with his sword. Sugriva then aimed a severe slap, but Virupaksha avoided the blow by his clever move, and struck a violent fist-blow on Sugriva's chest. Sugriva after recovering from that blow dealt a severe slap on Virupaksha's forehead. Virupaksha fell unconscious. He began to vomit blood. His eyes were shot upwards and Virupaksha breathed his last. Then the Vanaras roared in victory like the sea.

CHAPTER LXVIII

RAVANA'S FIGHT

Troops on both sides were being lost like the waters of a pond in summer.

The Rakshasa king, Ravana, was greatly enraged at the sight of Virupaksha's death and was also pained at the heavy loss of his own troops. At that time Mahodara was by his side. Ravana then, addressing Mahodara said, "Mahodara! now the only hope of victory rests with you; then put up a brave fight and destroy the enemies. I have maintained you so

long ; now the time has come for its return. So get ready for battle."

Thereupon, Mahodara in obedience to the behest of his master entered the enemy's line, as moth enters into a flame. The mighty Vanaras were striking the Rakshasas with huge stones and trees. Mahodara in rage began to destroy the Vanaras by his golden arrows. The Vanaras began to disperse in fear.

Sugriva seeing his troops thus scattered by Mahodara, took up a huge rock for the destruction of the latter, and hurled it with great violence against the Rakshasa chief. But Mahodara cut that in pieces. Then Sugriva took up a Parigha from the ground and with it destroyed the horses of Mahodara. Mahodara jumped down from his chariot and took up a club. The one with the club and the other with the flaming Parigha looked like clouds with lightning. Mahodara in rage hurled that huge mace glittering like the sun against Sugriva. Sugriva warded that off with the Parigha, but the Parigha was broken in pieces. Sugriva then picked up a formidable Mushala from the battle-field and hurled it towards Mahodara and Mahodara in order to prevent that threw a mace, but it was broken in fragments. Both of them were then without any arms, but both were heroic and strong and they began to strike each other with fists. Both of them fell on the ground and a heavy fight ensued. Gradually both of them became exhausted. But they again stood up against each other with swords. Each one sought

for an opportunity to strike and they began to wheel around one another from left to right. In the meantime Mahodara struck quickly on the armour of Sugriva. The sword struck fast into the armour and as Mahodara tried to draw out the sword, Sugriva severed his head adorned with helmet and ear-ring. Thereupon the Rakshasas ran away in fear, and the Vanaras set up heroic roars. Rama was delighted at this sight, Mahodara lay on the ground like a cleft mountain and Sugriva stood there in heroic pride like the sun. The denizens of heaven looked at Sugriva with eyes of approbation.

Then Mahaparswa flew into a rage at the destruction of Mahodara and entered the army commanded by Angada, and began to destroy the Vanaras right and left. Heroic Angada, thereupon, roared like an ocean and struck Mahaparswa with a glittering Parigha. Mahaparswa fell unconscious from his car. In the meantime heroic Jamvuvan came out and crushed his chariot and horses with a huge piece of rock.

Mahaparswa, however, soon regained consciousness and began to smother Angada with sharp arrows. Angada then pushed forward and dealt a severe slap on Mahaparswa's ear. Mahaparswa struck Angada with a sharp axe on his shoulder. But Angada was not the least affected by that blow but dealt a severe fist-blow on his chest. Mahaparswa's ribs were broken and he fell at once dead on the ground. The

Vanaras roared in delight and the Rakshasas ran away in panic.

Ravana was greatly enraged at that sight and addressing his charioteer said, "You see, my counsellors and followers are being daily destroyed, the city of Lanka has been under siege for a long time. I shall remove my intense grief by slaying Rama and Lakshmana this day. I shall cut down that big tree namely Rama, whose flower is Sita and whose branches are Sugriva, Jamvuvan, Kumud, Nala, Dvivida, Mainda, Angada, Gandhamadana, Sushena, Hanuman and the other leaders of the Vanaras."

With these words Ravana rushed towards Rama by resounding the field of battle with the deep rumbling noise of his car. The earth shook at the motion of his chariot, and beasts and birds were frightened by it.

The battle-field was densely crowded by the Vanara troops. Ravana in order to destroy them discharged the formidable Tamasa weapon made by Brahma. The Vanaras were burnt and singed by that weapon and fell in numbers on the field of battle. Many ran away in fear, and the clouds of dusts raised by the stampede of the Vanaras covered the sky. In short none could bear that dreadful weapon. Thus the Vanaras were dispersed and Ravana saw Rama and Lakshmana standing at a short distance from him. Rama stood ready for the fight by stretching forth his formidable bow.

Heroic Rama, on seeing wicked Ravana come, at last began to twang his bow repeatedly. The

tremendous sound produced by the twanging of his bow seemed to rend the sky and the earth and the Rakshasas fainted away in fear.

Ravana stood in front of Rama and Lakshmana, *like the formidable* Ketu *before the sun* and the moon.

In the meantime, Lakshmana got ready for the fight and began to shower shafts like tongues of fire on Ravana. Ravana too with amazing quickness cut those arrows a single shaft with a single arrow, two with two, three with three, ten with ten and so on. Ravana thus passed by Lakshmana and came before Rama, steady like a mountain, and began to shower shafts upon him, with eyes red with anger. Rama too quickly took up the Bhalla weapon and with it cut off those sharp shafts formidable like dreadful snakes.

Both of them were invincible and at times the one wheeled round the other from left to right. All beings became alarmed at the sight of those two mighty heroes, formidable as Death. The sky was overcast with their arrows as with clouds in the rainy season surcharged with lightning, and the interstices caused by their arrows (in that thick screen) appeared like so many windows. The sky grew dark even in the day time. Both were eager for each other's destruction, and a fierce fight ensued as between Indra and Vritrasura. Both were skilled in the art of battle, and both were the foremost of the warriors and along whatever spot they passed

that place was agitated with their arrows as if with the waves of a wind-tossed ocean.

Then Ravana struck Rama on the forehead with a number of Narachas. But being struck by those arms Rama, however, was not the least pained being struck by Naracha. He then stretched his bow, uttered mantras and began to discharge volleys of shafts in anger.

Then Rama skilled in the use of all weapons, struck Ravana with sharp weapons on the forehead. Those arrows, like five-hooded snakes, though obstructed by counter-shafts, struck Ravana's forehead and entered the earth with a hissing sound. Ravana became exceedingly angry, and got ready to discharge the formidable Asura weapons at Rama. Those weapons were shaped like the mouths of lions and tigers, some of them were shaped like the heads of vultures, hawks and jackals ; some of them were formed like the heads of boars, cocks, and of dogs. Those weapons began to fall with hissing sounds. Ravana panted like an angry serpent.

Thereupon Rama being surrounded by the Asura weapons discharged fire-arms.[1] Amongst those weapons some were like flames, some like the sun, some like meteors, some like lightning and some were bright like stars and planets. All those Asura weapons were shattered in pieces by Rama's fire-arms.

At that sight, Sugriva and other Vanaras

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1 The original expression is "Agneya Astra."

surrounded Rama with joy and set up heroic roars. Ravana seeing those Asura weapons thus frustrated became exceedingly enraged and discharged the formidable Maya weapon made by Maya. From his bow-string various sorts of arms like thunderbolt began to be discharged incessantly. Rama baffled those weapons by the Gandharva weapon.

Thereupon Ravana, in wrath, uttered a mantra and then bright discs like the sun and the moon began to shoot from his bow. Rama cut those with sharp weapons. Then Ravana struck Rama with ten arrows on the heart, but Rama was not the least moved by it. Then heroic Lakshmana in anger with seven arrows cut down his banner bearing the ensign of human heads, and severed the charioteer's head, and with five arrows he cut down Ravana's bow shaped like the trunk of an elephant. At that time Vibhishana too jumped forward and killed his huge horses like the hills. Then Ravana in anger hurled a Sakti lightning against him.

Lakshmana seeing that formidable Sakti aimed at Vibhishana cut it in pieces in the midway. The Vanaras roared in delight and that golden Sakti being broken in three pieces fell on the ground like flaming meteors. Thereupon Ravana took up another Sakti. That was burning with its own effulgence and was unbearable even to Death himself. That Sakti being whirled with force, began to emit a fierce glow like lightning.

Lakshmana fearing that Vibhishana's life was in danger soon came near him and began to discharge arrows to Ravana to save Vibhishana's life. Then Ravana gave up his determination for slaying his own brother and then looking at Lakshmana said, "You proud of your valour! when you have saved Vibhishana by being engaged in fighting, I shall leave him aside and hurl it against you. This Sakti eager to drink the enemy's blood will surely destroy you this day."

With these words heroic Ravana hurled that flaming Sakti towards Lakshmana, roaring like a lion. The Sakti was made by the magic spell of Maya Danava, was furnished with eight bells, producing a tremendous noise, and was irresistible. The Sakti then with a thundering noise proceeded towards Lakshmana.

At that sight Rama became alarmed and said, "Swasti, Swasti, Swasti,[1] let good happen to Lakshmana. May all your force and energy be frustrated and be you destroyed."

Then that terrible Sakti, like the forked tongue of the king of snakes, pierced Lakshmana's dauntless breast with great force, and it struck deep into his chest. Lakshmana fell in a swoon.

Rama, standing by him, became overwhelmed with grief at the sight of the condition of Lakshmana. Tears rolled down his cheeks in streams.

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1 Something like "Amen."

He brooded for some time and then in anger became formidable like the doomsday-fire and thinking that it was not the fit time to give way to grief became earnest about the destruction of Ravana.

Rama saw Lakshmana thus struck with the Sakti and lying on the ground like a hill infested with snakes. The Vanaras tried to draw out the Sakti from Lakshmana's chest, but being smothered by Ravana's arrows they could not succeed in any way. That Sakti, the destroyer of enemies, struck on the ground by piercing Lakshmana's chest through and through. The mighty Rama plucked out the Sakti with his two hands and broke it in pieces in anger.

At that time too Ravana discharged sharp arrows, but Rama did not pay any heed to them and embracing Lakshmana with affection said to Sugriva and Hanuman, "Ravana surrounding Lakshmana like this, the time for showing that valour has arrived for which I have prayed for such a length of time. I shall slay him this day. As the sight of the clouds are covetable to the Chatak bird in the season of rains, so the presence of this wicked villain has become exceedingly covetable to me. And verily I swear unto you that you will find the earth either without Ravana or Rama. All sorts of misfortunes have occured to me, like the loss of my kingdom, exile, a nomadic life in the forest, abduction of Janaki, and the hostility of the Rakshasa. I have suffered from mental agonies

and physical pains, but I shall forget all those things by destroying wicked Ravana this day.

"For this villain I have collected the Vanara troops, slain Vali and conferred his kingdom on Sugriva, and have crossed the sea by building a bridge over it, and he is now present before my sight. As none can live before the gaze of a snake that can inject its venom even by its look, as snakes cannot escape when they are within the sight of Garuda, the king of birds, so that villain has come within my view and I shall destroy him immediately. O Vanaras! sitting on the peaks of the hills witness our fighting. The Siddhas, Charanas, Gandharvas, and all the denizens of the three worlds will today witness the work of Rama with their own eyes. I shall perform this day such wonderful feat, that so long as the world lasts people will speak of it."

With these words heroic Rama got ready to discharge arrows against Ravana. Ravana too began to shower arrows upon Rama as clouds pour forth rains. The battle-field was filled with a tremendous noise by the clashing of antagonistic arms, and the broken parts of the arrows fell on the ground with flaming ends. All the creatures grew frightened at the twanging sound of their bow-string. In the meantime Ravana being smothered by Rama's arrows soon fled from the battle-field like a cloud chased by the wind.

Then Rama said to Sushena, "Lakshmana is here rolling on the ground like a snake, he is dearer to me than my life. My heart aches

seeing him thus suffering heavily and besmeared with blood. I have no more energy for fighting. Alas ! if Lakshmana dies what happiness will then be in life, what is the good of living at all ? I am losing my strength, my bow is slipping from my grasp, my eyes are dim with tears, my body is benumbed as if in a dream, anxiety smothers my heart and I feel inclined to die."

At that time Lakshmana being restless with pain cried out in an unnatural voice. Rama was much aggrieved by it, and then addressing Sushena, he said, "Sushena ! seeing brother Lakshmana lying on the field of battle, even victory in war does not appear pleasant to me. Can the moon delight others by being absent from the sky ? What is the good of fighting any more ? What is the good of retaining my life ? When I came to the forest, this hero accompanied me, now I shall accompany him to the abode of Death. He is loving and most obedient to me, he has met with such fate at the hands of the crooked Rakshasa warrior. In every place, wives may be had, in every country one may get friends, but there is not a place where one can get a brother like Lakshmana. Sushena ! what is the good of getting back my kingdom without Lakshmana ? What shall I say to mother Sumitra devoted to her son after returning to Ayodhya ? When she will chide me in sorrow for her son, how shall I bear that ? What shall I say to mother Kausalya and mother Kaikeyi ? When Bharata and Satrughna will say to me, 'You

went to the forest with Lakshmana, but why have you come back without him', what shall I then say to them? Death seems to me preferable to bearing the rebukes of my near and dear ones. I know not what great sins I did commit in my former birth for which virtuous Lakshmana is slain before me! O my brother! O my brother! O great warrior! why do you go alone to the next world, leaving me behind? I am crying for you, I am grieving for you, why don't you greet me with love? You used to console me when I was smitten with sorrow in hills and forests,—why are you then silent now?"

Then Sushena seeing Rama thus lamenting said, "O great hero! banish this despair and all sorrowful thoughts. Such thoughts and such judgments are injurious like the arrows of an enemy. Dear Lakshmana is alive, look, his face is quite beaming and bright, it has not been distorted, not turned blue. His palms are red like the petals of a lotus and his eyes are bright. O king! a dead man has not got these signs. Lakshmana is lying stretched on the ground and from the constant throbbings of his heart, his respiration can be inferred."[1] Wise Sushena saying all these to Rama then said to Hanuman, "O noble one! go to that mountain of medicines about which Jamvuvan spoke to you formerly,

1 Hindu systems of medicine reached their perfection long, long before other nations were even aware of the elementary notions of cure.

and soon fetch all the medicinal plants that have grown on its southern peak. For the cure of Lakshmana bring without delay, Visalyakarani, Savaranyakarani, Sanjivakarani and Sandhani,—these four kinds of medicines."

Then, Hanuman arrived at the mountain of medicines and finding no trace of them he began to think, "Let me carry this peak. From what I could understand from Sushena's words, the medicines are on this peak. If I cannot take Visalyakarani, people will think me a fool, and if I waste time in thoughts, there is great danger to Lakshmana's life."

Thus thinking Hanuman moved the peak three times with his hands and then plucked it bodily and carried the peak covered with trees, plants and flowers on his arms and got upon the sky and in great speed arrived before Sushena, and then resting the peak, said, "Sushena! I could not find out the medicines spoken of by you, and therefore I have brought the entire peak before you."

Thereupon, Sushena after praising Hanuman found out the medicines. The Vanaras were astonished at this mighty feat of Hanuman. Then Sushena after crushing the medicinal plants put them before Lakshmana's nostrils for his inhalation. As soon as Lakshmana inhaled them he was cured of all pains, he sat up being free from the splinter.[1] The Vanaras greeted

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1 There were four kinds of cure amongst the ancient Hindus, the first and the best was to cure a person by Mantras, then by smell of the medicines, then by wearing

him with joy. "Come, come," with these words on his lips, Rama embraced him with tearful eyes, "my boy! it is sheer good luck that I find you alive today. If you die, of what use is Janaki, victory in war or even this life to me?"

Lakshmana was, however, greatly sorry for such words of Rama and seeing his lack of enthusiasm, and promptness on his part, he said, "Oh, worshipful lord! is it becoming of you to neglect your vows? The sign of greatness is to fulfil one's promise. Truthful persons never behave otherwise. O hero! why do you despair so much on my account? Destroy wicked Ravana this day with all his hosts; can an elephant escape from a roaring lion? This day, the wicked fellow will surely meet with his death at your hand. I wish that you should slay before the sun sets in the evening. It is a duty to fulfil one's pledge, if you care to recover Janaki, then comply with my words."

Chapter LXIX

THE GREAT BATTLE BEGINS

In the meantime, the Rakshasa king, Ravana, got upon another chariot and rushed towards Rama, as Rahu rushes towards the sun, and he began to shower arrows on Rama, as the clouds pour forth rain. Thereupon, Rama too took

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them on the person as an amulet and the last, i.e., inferior to the first three methods of cure was to cure, a person by administering the drug through the mouth.

up his bow and began to discharge flaming arrows against Ravana.

At that time, the denizens of heaven seeing Rama standing on the ground and Ravana seated on a chariot talked amongst themselves saying such a contest was unequal since one was on the ground and the other was on the car. At these words Indra, king of the gods, said to Matali, "Take this chariot soon to Rama and tell him that the king of the gods has sent down this chariot for you. O charioteer! go down on the earth and accomplish this noble decd."

Then the divine charioteer bowing down to Indra said, "I shall soon be a charioteer to Rama." With these words he yoked yellow horses ornamented with gold and adorned with white manes. That chariot was made of sapphire and wrought in gold and looked bright like the morning sun. Its staff was made of gold. Matali descended with that chariot on earth and holding the reins in his hands appeared before Rama, and said with joined palms, "O hero! the king of the gods for your victory has sent down this chariot, this formidable bow, this bright armour, these glittering arrows like the sun, and this bright Sakti. I shall act as your charioteer. As Indra destroyed the Danavas by getting upon this chariot, so you will destroy wicked Ravana this day."

Then Rama wheeled round the divine chariot and got upon it with a respectful bow.

Then a fierce fight ensued between Rama and Ravana. Rama began to baffle the Gandharva

weapons of Ravana by Gandharva arms, and the Daiva weapons by the same arms. In the meantime, Ravana in anger discharged the Rakshasa weapon against Rama. As soon as that was discharged it assumed the form of a dreadful snake and proceeded vomiting venom on its way. It was burning with its own effulgence and its touch was rough like that of Vasuki, the king of snakes. At that time the sky became covered with the Rakshasa weapons. Then heroic Rama discharged the Garuda weapon to frustrate the Uraga weapon. Garuda being the enemy of the snakes, thus destroyed all the snake-like weapons in no time. Thereupon, Ravana became enraged and began to strike Rama with a shower of arrows and pierced Matali with shafts. With one shaft, Ravana cut down the golden flagstaff of Rama's chariot and destroyed the steeds of Indra yoked before the car. Thereupon the denizens of heaven grew dejected with despair. The planet Rahu, seeing Rama under the grip of Ravana, like the moon under eclipse, attacked Rohini—the consort of the moon and daughter of Prajapati. The ocean became agitated and was covered with smoke and the billows seemed to touch the sun in the horizon in fury. The bright sun grew dim. It was seen attached to a comet, like a headless trunk thrown on its cap. Inauspicious stars attacked the auspicious stars of the Kusala kings. And Ravana seemed formidable like the huge Mainaka hill, standing with a bow in his hand. At that time being smitten with his arrows, Rama could not aim at Ravana. His eyes became

red with anger and his countenance grew grave with a fearful frown. He began to scorch the Rakshasas by his wrath. All became dismayed at the sight of his dreadful look, and nature was convulsed with fear, evil portents were seen in the sky. In fact, even Ravana himself was frightened seeing that dreadful wrath of Rama and various evil portents on all sides. At that time the denizens of heaven were watching intently the great fight between the two formidable warriors.[1] They took either Rama's or Ravana's side and prayed for the victory of their favourite. The Asuras prayed for Ravana's victory and the gods for that of Rama.

After a while, wicked Ravana took up a great Sula for the destruction of Rama. That formidable Sula was the terror even of Death himself.

Its three high prongs struck terror at sight. It was burning like the doomsday-fire. Ravana in rage held that Sula in hand and set up a heroic roar cheering the Rakshasas with courage and hope. Its terrific sound filled all

1 As almost all the details are repeated again and again in each and every fight described in the Yuddhakanda, we have omitted useless repetitions which add neither to the beauty, nor to the vigour of the description, nor are they of any poetic value. These repetitions conclusively prove that other hands than that of Valmiki were always ready to try their hands at Verse-making under the sanction of the sacred name of Valmiki. A great poet like Valmiki can never be guilty of such frivolous and worthless repetitions.—Translator.

directions, and all creatures trembled with fear and the sea heaved up in great agitation.

Wicked Ravana, holding the Sula aloft told Rama with blood-shot eyes in anger :

"Here, I take up this formidable Sula, like the thunderbolt, and shall surely destroy you this day with it. You will be one of those numbers who have fallen on the field of battle."

Saying this Ravana hurled that dreadful Sula. As soon as the Sula, encircled with eight bells, was discharged, it proceeded like a fearful lightning blinding all eyes with its fierce glow. Then, as Indra puts out the doomsday-fire by incessant showers of rain, so Rama tried to prevent that mighty Sula with showers of arrows. But as fire burns flies and moths, that Sula reduced Rama's arrows into ashes. Thereupon, Rama grew quite furious and took the Sakti brought by Matali, the charioteer of Indra.

That Sakti set everything into blaze, like a comet that appears on the day of universal dissolution and fell violently upon that Sula, and the Sula at once was shivered into pieces.

Then heroic Rama struck with arrows Ravana's steeds and pierced his forehead. Ravana being wounded all over the body began to bleed profusely, and with number of heads and arms[1] he looked like an Asoka tree in blossom.

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1 After a long lapse of epic description here again Ravana is a hydraheaded monster. Ravana seldom appears with numerous hands and heads.

Thereupon, Ravana grew furious, he took up his bow and began to shower arrows on Rama as the clouds pour rain upon a lake. But heroic Rama remained quite unmoved like a hill, and began to ward off all the shafts. Then Ravana with swift hands began to srike Rama's flank with arrows bright as the sun's rays. Being wounded by those arrows Rama looked like a Kinsuka tree in bloom and in anger he grew quite incapable of being looked at like the glowing sun on the day of the universal dissolution of the world.

Then Rama addressed Ravana in anger and said, "Thou worst of the Rakshasas! thou hast carried off my helpless wife from Janasthana without thinking of the consequences, and thou shalt be destroyed for that reason. Thou didst carry away Janaki when she was quite helpless in the forest and for that thou dost consider thyself as a hero! Thou didst behave like a coward towards a woman whose husband was distant from her and still thou dost consider thyself valiant. Thou shameless villain! thou hast violated the path of virtue. In thy haughtiness thou hast taken Death on your lap and thinkest thyself to be acceptable to her. Thou art brother of Kuvera, the lord of the Yakshasas, and what a glorious act thou hast performed by stealing another's wife? Surely, it is a proof of thy valour! Now you will have to reap the consequences of your haughty deeds.

"Thou fool! thou hast vanity in thy mind as a hero, but dost not feel ashamed to steal another's wife like a thief. Now, if that thing

occured in my presence, surely then you would have to follow your brother Khara and could have seen his face in the realm of death.

"It is really my good luck that I have gained your sight. I shall even now despatch you to the abode of Death with my sharp arrows. The ravenous birds of prey will, this day, find your head rolling in the dust and you will lie stretched on the field of battle, then vultures will drink your heart's blood to quench their thirst, and when you will fall the birds will peck into your entrails as Garuda feeds upon the snakes."

Thus reprimanding Ravana with harsh words Rama began to shower arrows on Ravana. All the mysteries of the weapons and their application began to revive in his memory and his swiftness increased with his enthusiasm.

Having perceived all these auspicious signs in himself Rama began to strike Ravana with greater energy and strength. Ravana being smitten by Rama's arrows and by the stones and rocks hurled by the Vanaras became exhausted and weak. Then, Rama had no more enthusiasm to destroy Ravana at that time.[1] But Ravana's charioteer fearing that Ravana might die from the arrows already received hurried him away from the field of battle.

1 It is possible for Rama only, to let off such an enemy, because he was exhausted in fighting.

CHAPTER LXX

THE GREAT MANTRA

After a short time, when Ravana regained his consciousness, he turned towards the charioteer with angry eyes and said, "You fool! am I weak or infirm? Have I no valour or might? Have I no strength or vigour? Am I a coward? Has the Rakshasi power of magic deserted me? Am I not versed in the use of arms that you are doing things at your will by slighting me altogether? Why have you without knowing my intention turned back the chariot from the presence of my enemy? O, mean fellow! it is on account of you that my reputation and value have been spoiled. You have, this day, completely broken people's faith in my prowess. You have proved me a coward before that enemy of mine to whom I should appear as an invincible hero. You fool! since you are not taking me back to the field of battle, it appears that you have been bribed by my enemy, what you have done is not worthy of a friend, but of a foe. You have been all along maintained by me, if you have any grateful memory for this service, then hurry me back soon to the battlefield before the enemy retires."

The gentle charioteer hearing these harsh expressions of foolish Ravana, entreatingly said, "O Rakshasa chief! I am neither afraid, nor without feelings of gratitude. Your adversary has not bribed me, nor have I forgotten your kind services, but to speak the truth, I have

acted thus for your welfare and reputation. So you should not accuse me, as you would do in the case of a low-born, selfish fellow. Just listen to me, why I have turned back the chariot from the field, as the waters of the streams rush back when the sea swells. I found you to be exhausted and weaker than your adversary, my steeds were bathed in sweat like cattle drenched in rain, and they were disabled by fatigue. Besides, the signs that were seen during the fight were not favourable to us. O king! a charioteer should be careful in good many things. He must have a clear idea about time, place, auspicious and inauspicious signs, of want, of enthusiasm, as well as of despair. He should have also knowledge about the height or depth of a level, time of assault, and should find out the weak points of the enemy. He should also know when to appear with the chariot, when to stop and when to retire. I did not leave the battle-field thoughtlessly or willingly. O king! this act is due to my love for you, now I await your orders and shall do what you will ask me to perform."

Thereupon, Ravana felt satisfied and after praising him duly in his eagerness for fight, said, "O charioteer! soon take back the chariot to the field of battle. Ravana will not desist before slaying his enemy."

With these words, Ravana presented him the ornaments of his arms. The charioteer then drove back the chariot swiftly to the battle-field.

Then the great saint Agastya came to witness

the fight with the denizens of heaven. He appeared before Rama and said, "My boy! to you I shall cite that Adityahridaya prayer by virtue of which you will be able to conquer your enemy. This prayer is highly sacred and most secret, and destroys all foes. It brings about all good and absolves one of all sins. All sorrows and anxieties are removed by it and one attains longevity and salvation at the end.[1]

"My boy! the sun is endowed with rays and he rises every day. He is worshipped by the gods and the Asuras. He is the lord of the world, pray to him.

"He embodies the essence of all gods and is full of energy and vigour. He reveals all things by his rays and supports all, the gods and the Asuras by them. He is Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Skanda and Prajapati. He is Indra, Vasu and Sadhyas. He is the twin Aswinikumara, wind and Manu. He is fire, life, creature and the author of seasons.[2] He is Aditya, Surya, Savita,

1 The belief that Ramchandra introduced the Durga Puja that is celebrated in the beginning of Autumn by worshipping the Goddess at that time for the destruction of Ravana, finds no countenance in the Ramayana. This fact has been mentioned in another Purana. Brahma, at night, invoked the Spirit of Goddess Durga, she appeared in the bright fortnight before Rama and Lakshmana and encouraged them to fight and on the Navami night she struck down Rama.

2 The above verse is apparently of Vedic nature and it refers no doubt to the Almighty creator who pervades the creation in various forms, and is worshipped under various names.

Khaga, Pusha, and Gabhastiman. He is Hiranyareta and the maker of the day. He is the master of seven yellow steeds[1] endowed with heat and light. He is the destroyer of all darkness, Sambhu, Viswakarma, Martanda and Ansuman. He is full of fire, and the son of Aditi. He is the ruler of the sky, the destroyer of all darkness and the object of proof in the three Vedas.[2] He is the originator of the world and moves fast in his orbit. He is Atapi, Pingala, Death and the destroyer of everything. He is the poet, blood and energy of the universe and a final cause of all events. He is the lord of all planets and stars. He is the most vigorous amongst the vigorous and has twelve souls.[3] Bow down to him. He is the Eastern hills and the Western hills. He is Jayabhadra and the formidable hero. He is the object of attainment of the sound of Omkara. He makes the lotus bloom and he is fearless. He is the lord of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. He is wisdom, the destroyer of ignorance and the consumer of everything. He is of a dreadful image and the vanquisher of all enemies. His nature is infallible.

1 Steeds apparently refer to the seven elementary colours of the sun's light.

2 Generally speaking, the Vedas are four in number, but it has been mentioned as three because the Atharva Veda is a later addition to the existing Rik, Sama and Yajus.

3 In the legendary astronomy of the Hindus there is mention of twelve suns in the sky, all the twelve will rise on the day of the universal dissolution.

"He is the universal witness and the smiter of the ungrateful and he is golden Hari. He is the creator and destroyer of all elements. He draws water by his rays and pours it back as rain. He rouses the creatures every morning from their sleep. He is the bestower of rewards to the Agnihotras. He is the God of sacrifice, the sacrifice itself and the fruit of sacrifice. He brings about all that happens in the world and among the created beings, O Rama ! he who is overcome with fear of death, disease and stands in fear of being robbed (when he prays to this Sun-god), is not to be vanquished. Now, you pray with concentrated mind and devotion to this Lord of the Universe. If you recite this Aditya-hridaya prayer three times, you will be victorious and be able to destroy Ravana at this moment."

With these words, the great saint Agastya retired to his hermitage. Rama, too, became confident of Ravana's death and cheerfully cherished the Mantra in his heart.

CHAPTER LXXI

THE RENEWED STRUGGLE

In the meantime, the charioteer of Ravana proceeded cheerfully with the chariot to the field of battle. That chariot looked like the wonderful city of the Gandharvas. It was fully equipped with fighting weapons and was decorated with flag-staffs and streamers and it was yoked with excellent black steeds of spirited mettle, adorned with golden chains. Its sight

encouraged one's own side and struck terror into the hearts of the enemy. Its very height seemed to threaten the sky.

The chariot, bright as the sun, seemed to burn with its own effulgence. The chariot from a distance looked like a mass of clouds, with streamers like lightning and rainbow. Arrows were discharged from it like rains and it came rumbling like a clap of thunder that splits the mountain.

Then Rama took up a bow, curved like a second moon, and stretching it said to Matali :

"Look ! how fast Ravana is coming towards me. As he is proceeding towards my right, it is evident that he intends to kill me. Now be careful. As the wind drives away the rising cloud, I shall destroy him this day. Drive the chariot without any fear before him. Keep your eyes upon the horses and be careful about the reins. You are the charioteer of the king of gods, Indra ; do not think I am trying to teach the art of a charioteer, but I am simply reminding you of that."

Thereupon, Matali cheerfully drove the chariot through the cloud of dust raised by the chariot wheels of Ravana. At that, Ravana grew exceedingly angry and with red-hot eyes began to shower arrows upon Rama. Rama also took up a formidable bow and sharp arrows. Then each being resolved to kill his adversary, the two warriors challenged each other like two angry lions. Saints and denizens of heaven began to pray for Rama's victory and the des-

truction of Ravana, and they all assembled to witness the terrible duel.

Various kinds of evil portents were then seen presaging the fall of Ravana and the rise of Rama. The Gods began to rain blood upon Ravana's chariot and a fierce tornado began to sweep towards the left. Vultures hovered in the sky over Ravana's chariot. The city of Lanka was set ablaze in a blood-red twilight, and during the day, it looked as a deep scarlet flower like the Java. There were constant lightning flashes in the sky and meteors fell in showers. Even there was earthquake where Ravana's chariot stood. Then the sun's rays of various colours fell before Ravana's chariot and the ground appeared to be tinged with minerals. Jackals following the vultures began to howl fiercely, vomiting fire from their jaws. Winds on all sides raised dust and blinded Ravana's eyes, the sky grew dark with them. Thunder fell upon the heads of the Rakshasas though there were no clouds in the sky. Birds chirping in harsh tones flocked to Ravana's chariot, sparks of fire began to fly from the hoofs of the horses and tears trickled down their eyes. Various kinds of such evil omens were seen on all sides of Ravana. The Rakshasas engaged in fighting became greatly dejected at all this and their hands were paralysed with fear. Than Matali thought that the hour of Ravana's death was near. Rama also seeing auspicious signs of victory on his side, grew cheerful and was eager to display his prowess.

Then a terrible duel ensued between Rama and Ravana. The Rakshasas and the Vanaras stood still with weapons in their hands and in great amazement and anxiety they watched the struggle between the two and they gave up their endeavours of attacking one another. The Rakshasas in wonder looked at Ravana and the Vanaras at Rama, and they appeared like so many painted figures. Everything appeared to be auspicious to Rama and everything inauspicious to Ravana. Both the heroes fought fearlessly in the fury of their wrath. Both Rama and Ravana became anxious to display their utmost skill and prowess : Ravana for his death and Rama for victory.

Heroic Ravana discharged his shaft at the flag of Rama, but it fell on the ground by grazing only the side of it. Then Rama discharged his arrow at the flag-staff of Ravana and the flag-staff at once fell on the ground being cut in pieces. Thereupon, heroic Ravana in great anger pierced the chargers of Rama, but his arrows could not stop their course, nor could they produce any deep effect on them ; on the contrary they seemed to be struck by so many stalks of lotuses ! Ravana at that sight grew more furious and began to hurl maces, parighas, mushalas, chakras and other weapons at them ; and the battle-field grew dreadful for those arms.

Then, Ravana with great violence fell upon the Vanaras and began to rain incessant shafts on them. Rama too, with a smiling countenance began to discharge arrows at Ravana. On

account of the arrows discharged by both the warriors, a second bright sky seemed to form under the canopy of heaven. The shafts of both the heroes were irresistible and capable to hit their aims and to frustrate the others' arrows. All those arrows fell on the ground clashing against one another. Rama and Ravana began to discharge shafts incessantly stationing themselves on the right and on the left of each other. Rama pierced Ravana's horses and Ravana those of Rama. Thus the field of battle grew fearful by the attacks and counter-attacks of the two.

Then heroic Rama cut down the flag-staff of Ravana in pieces, Ravana in furious rage began to discharge arrows against Rama. Every one in amazement watched that dreadful fight between the two.

The great warriors rushed against each other in exceeding wrath, and each one attempted to effect the other's death. Their charioteers showed utmost skill by their clever movements of the chariots and both the chariots having shafts incessantly discharged from them appeared like two raining clouds.

Rama and Ravana after some circuitous movements again faced each other and began to fight desperately. During that fight both the heroes drew so close to each other that the pole of one's chariot touched that of the other and the heads of one's horses brushed against those of the other. In the meantime, Rama quickly took up four sharp arrows and cut down four horses of Ravana. Thereupon, Ravana showered

sharp arrows upon Rama, but Rama, though wounded by them, was not the least moved by them. On the contrary, Rama with redoubled energy began to fight with Ravana and hurled thunderbolt-like arms against him.

Then Ravana struck Matali with some shafts, but Matali was not the least affected by them. On account of Matali's hurt Rama grew more furious and to prevent Ravana from striking Matali, began to rain shafts of Ravana and also on his chariot. Ravana, too, in anger began to strike Rama with maces and mushalas. By degrees the fight between the two grew exceedingly fearful. By the ringing of the arms and by the buzzing sound produced by the feathers attached to the arrows, the seven seas were disturbed.

In the meantime, the denizens of heaven got frightened by that fearful fight. "May good happen to Brahmanas and cows and may Ravana fall at the hands of Rama" thus prayed the gods. At the sight of that dreadful contest the Gandharvas and Nymphs said among themselves, "The sky can only be compared with itself, the ocean with its ownself; likewise the fight between Rama and Ravana is without a parallel and can only be compared to itself and to nothing else."

Shortly after, Rama grew exceedingly enraged and cut down Ravana's head by aiming a terrible shaft like a dreadful snake. The inhabitants of the three worlds saw that Ravana's head was actually rolling on the ground, but

immediately another head grew up in its place ! Rama again promptly cut the same, but another head again sprang up in its place. Thus though Rama cut down hundred heads of Ravana, still Ravana did not die !

Then, Rama skilled in all sorts of arms thought within himself, "Certainly, these are the same arrows that once destroyed Maricha, Dushan and Khara ; that killed Viradha in the cave in the Krauncha woods ; that destroyed Kavandha in the Dandaka forest ; that pierced through the seven palm trees at a time, that slew Vali and agitated the ocean, but how is it that they become frustrated by coming in contact with Ravana's body ?"

Having failed to understand this mystery, Rama became greatly anxious, but he did not slacken his endeavours in any way to destroy Ravana. Rama began to strike incessantly against Ravana's breast. Ravana too grew furious at that and began to hurl maces and mushalas against Rama. The fight thickened between the two. The denizens of heaven watched the fight between the two day and night. The fight continued day and night without any respite.

CHAPTER LXXII

THE FALL OF RAVANA

Then the heavenly charioteer, Matali, said to Rama, "It seems you are anxious about the destruction of Ravana without knowing anything about it. Now, discharge the Brahma

weapon. The time that has been appointed for the destruction of Ravana has arrived."

As soon as Matali reminded Rama of this, Rama took up divine Brahmastra, which formerly Prajapati, the creator of the three worlds gave to Indra for the conquest of the three worlds. After that Rama got it from the sage Agastya. On the two wings of that weapon was seated the wind, on the blade the sun and the fire, in the body the great sky (ether) and in heaviness the Sumeru and the Mandara hills seemed to weigh upon it. It was created with the essence of all elements. It was burning with its own effulgence, it was smeared with fat and blood. It looked like doomsday-fire covered with smoke. It was dreadful to look at and was hard and deep-sounding like a thunderbolt. By its power, men, beasts, birds, snakes and all fortifications were pounded into pieces. It was dreadful like an angry snake and formidable like Death himself. By its very sight the Vanaras and the Rakshasas got dejected.

Heroic Rama then with due mantras of the Veda fixed it to his bow. No sooner was it fixed, the earth began to quake and all the creatures were struck with terror. Rama in great anger discharged it at Ravana. As soon as that dreadful shaft was discharged with great speed, it fell upon Ravana ; it pierced his heart into two and entered the earth after depriving Ravana of his lile.[1] Bow and arrow slipped

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1 Our readers must have followed carefully the epic

from Ravana's hands, and he fell down from the chariot with a mighty crash like Vritrasura struck by the thunderbolt. In the meantime the Brahma weapon after executing its work, again entered into the quiver of Rama.

Then the remnants of Ravana's army fled away for fear of their lives. Thereupon the Vanaras fell upon the Rakshasas with trees and branches in their hands. The Rakshasas were thus routed and scattered in different directions and they entered the city with tearful eyes.

The Vanaras then roared in delight and cried victory to Rama. Sweet music was heard above. A sweet and scented breeze began to blow around. Rare flowers were showered upon the chariot of Rama. The gods began to sing praise of Rama in the sky. They were exceedingly glad at the death of Ravana, the terror of the three worlds.

By the grace of heroic Rama, the desires of Sugriva, Angada and Vibhishana were fulfilled. All were delighted at Ravana's death. The sky grew clear, the sun became bright, and the earth an abode of peace.

Then Sugriva, Vibhishana, Angada and Lakshmana in their order paid their

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development of Ravana's character. He is indeed a really great creation in the history of art. A mighty king, whose sway was acknowledged by all kings and princes, whom the gods held in awful respect, an invincible conqueror, conquered at last by his own unconquerable impulses which alienated Vibhishana, turned an ally of Rama.

respect and tribute to Rama and sang the praise of his victory. Then Rama surrounded by his friends and followers, appeared like Indra encircled by thc gods in heaven.

CHAPTER LXXIII

LAMENTATIONS

Then Vibhishana seeing his brother, Ravana, fallen on the field, began to lament with a sorrowful heart :

"O hero! costly bed would become you; then why do you lie prostrate on the ground stretching forth your listless arms ? My heart rends with sorrow seeing your jewelled diadem rolling on the dust. You did not pay heed to what I had said to you before, through your lust and desire. But my words have, at last, come to be fulfilled. Prahasta, Indrajit, Kumbhakarna, Atikaya, Narantaka and yourself did not listen to my words, out of your pride, but alas! they have been fulfilled. Alas! the shelter of the virtuous, the image of righteousness, and the protector of the valiant is gone. You have attained the supreme end of the heroes, but we are stricken with sorrow.

"Alas! (By your fall) it seems the sun has fallen on the ground ; the moon is sunk in darkness ; the fire is extinct ; and the cause of popular religion is gone for ever.

"O hero! since you lie here prostrate on the ground, meseems there is no other Rakshasa

living in the city of Lanka. You lie like a great tree having fortitude for its leaves, energy for flowers, meditation for fruits, and prowess for its roots, now torn up by the root by a fearful storm that came in the form of Rama.

"Alas! this day, Ravana has been slain by Rama, as an infuriated elephant having valour for its tusks, pride of rank for the backbone, and contentment for its trunk, by a lion in the form of Rama. Fire-like Ravana, having prowess and energy for its flame, angry sighs for smoke, and might for its burning power, has been extinguished by cloud-like Rama. The bull-like Ravana has been killed by tiger-like Rama. The tail, hump and horns of this bull were the Rakshasas, and restless energy were his eyes and ears. He was swift as the wind invincible."

Finding Vibhishana lamenting thus, Rama said, "O hero! this Lord of the Rakshasas has not fallen like one weak and exhausted, but he was formidable and fearless of death up to his end. He has been accidentally slain. Those Kshatriyas who seek for glory can never be wretched by embracing death on the field of battle, you should not lament over the death of that warrior who put even Indra to flight in battle. Besides, there is no such law that one will always be crowned with victory, he will either destroy his enemies, or fall in the hands of his foes: this is the duty of Kshatriyas that has been prescribed by the sages of the past. It is quite improper to lament the death of this Kshatriya, and it is also inconsistent with the

shastras. Remove your sorrows thinking of this and just think of what is to be done now."

Then Vibhishana said with a sorrowful heart, "Rama! thou hast slain today him whom even the gods could not conquer before. This hero had granted more than what was asked of him, he supported his dependants and friends most liberally; he enjoyed everything that was precious or delicious. He contributed to the prosperity of his friends and to the destruction of his enemies. He was well-versed in the Vedas and Vedangas, a great Yogi and was chief amongst the performers of the Agnihotra sacrifice and other rites. Now, if you permit me I may perform his funeral rites."[1]

Rama was deeply sorry at these words of Vibhishana and with a sad heart said, "Enmity ends with death. Our end has been gained, now perform his funeral rites. Know that Ravana was dear to me as he was to you."

Afterwards the Rakshasa women hearing of Ravana's death came out of the city-gate in overwhelming grief. Though they were repeatedly prevented from going out, yet they did not pay heed to any kind of dissuasion, but they ran like cattle as if deprived of their young ones. They were stumbling on earth and their long tresses were kissing the dust.

Those Rakshasa women emerged from the

1 Now our contention is quite clear that Ravana could not be a non-Aryan as the popular belief goes.

northern gate and arrived at the field of battle, and they began to roam about the place strewn with dead bodies, calling him as their worshipful lord. Being overwhelmed with sorrow, with tearful eyes they searched for their common lord, and descried from a distance, the great and formidable Ravana of collyrium hue, lying dead on the field of battle. They fell upon his body, like so many creepers uprooted by storm. Some embraced him with respectful look, some began to cry taking his arms or feet in their hands. Some raised his arms and threw herself on the ground, some fainted looking at the face. Some one took his head on her lap and began to shed incessant tears on it, and his face looked like a lotus covered with icicles. Every one cried disconsolately at Ravana's death. They set up piteous lamentations, saying, "Alas! he who at one time conquered Indra, Yama and captured the Pushpaka chariot from Kuvera now lies dead on the field of battle. He who was not the least afraid of gods and demons or of the turagas has at last, met with his death at the hands of a human being! He who was unconquerable by the gods and Asuras been slain by a mortal man who treads the earth on two legs. He whom even the gods could not destroy, has been killed by an ordinary man.

"O king! without listening to the words of the well-wishers you had stolen Sita for your death and for the destruction and ruin of us all. What good advice was not given to you by your brother Vibhishana, but for your own death and ruin, you provoked Rama's wrath.

If you returned Janaki to Rama, then such disasters would not have befallen us, then Vibhishana would have remained a friend, and we would not have been widowed by this time, and the desires of the enemies would not have been thus fulfilled. But to your evil luck you used force against Sita ; this is how you have brought about destruction upon you and all the Rakshasas. Or why should we blame you ? It is Fate that brings about everything ; a man never dies unless Fate slays him down. The death of innumerable Vanaras and Rakshasas are due to fate. A man cannot avert his impending fate by money, by his will, by his valour or by his command."

Thus the consorts of Ravana wept bitterly in sorrow.

CHAPTER LXXIV

MANDODARI'S LAMENTS

In the meantime, Mandodari, the chief of the beloved queens of Ravana, began to lament bitterly in heart-rending sorrow, "O lord ! when you were angry, even Indra could not approach you then. All ran away for fear of you. Alas ! you art defeated today by an ordinary man ! Don't you feel ashamed at this ? What is this ? Once you conquered the three worlds by your prowess, but this day you have been slain by a humble human being who lived in exile in the forest ! You could assume different forms at will and this city of Lanka,

inaccessible to all, was your abode. Still you have been slain by an ordinary man! It appears like an impossible feat. Perhaps Death himself for your destruction came in the form of Rama and threw his fatal spell when you were off your guard. Or perhaps Indra has killed you; but this too doesn't seem probable. Indra cannot dare to face you in battle. Or it may be that Vishnu who is omniscient, who is above birth, death and infirmities of age, who is great amongst the greatest, who is the ruler of the universe, who holds in his hand conch-shell, discus, mace and lotus, who bears in his bosom the mark of Srivatsa, who is invincible and unmoved, whose splendour is unalterable and undiminished, who is almighty, who is truth, who is the Lord of all the worlds, that Vishnu has assumed the form of Rama and with the assistance of gods in the form of the Vanaras has slain you for the welfare of creatures. O Lord! formerly you conquered the three worlds and for that the gods might have conquered you in return. Alas! when Khara with fourteen thousand Rakshasas was slain in Janasthana, then I came to understand that Rama was not an ordinary human being. My mind ever trembled with misapprehensions since the day Hanuman had entered Lanka inaccessible even to the gods. I told you formerly not to foster hostility, but you did not pay any heed to my words. Now this is the result of not listening to those words. You became deeply enamoured of Sita for your destruction with your near and dear ones.

"Sita is superior to Arundhati and Rohini in every respect, and you committed a heinous sin by abducting that worshipful woman. Her fortitude is unparalleled; she is more forbearing than the earth, and she can stand everything; she is more beautiful than beauty itself, the splendour of all splendours and highly devoted to her husband. But having brought her from the interior of a dense forest you have been slain with all your brood. You wanted to enjoy Sita, but instead of that desire being fulfilled you have been destroyed by the fire of her chastity. That you were not reduced to ashes by the wrath of Sita when you abducted her, was simply because fire did not venture to approach you for your former prowess. But, my Lord! one has to reap the fruits of sin in due time, and its illustration is the happiness of Vibhishana and this sad calamity of yours. O Lord! you had many women more beautiful than Sita, but for your infatuation and lust you could not understand that. Sita is in no way comparable to me in beauty, or in pride of rank, but you failed to realise that in your ignorance and lust. Nobody dies without a cause, and Sita is the cause of your death. You did yourself court your death. Henceforward Sita, free from all sorrows, will pass her time in happiness with Rama, but this wretched me will be lost in an ocean of sorrow. O valiant hero! how did I pass my time in amorous dalliance with you in Chaitraratha and other heavenly gardens. Being dressed in beautiful apparel I travelled in various countries with you, but with your

death all such enjoyments and happiness have come to an end. I have become a widow this day, and now I do realise that royal fortune is unstable.

"O my Lord! your countenance in brightness was like the sun, in loveliness like the moon, and in beauty like the lotus ; what a fair skin, a high brow, a fine nose did you possess! How you were adorned with jewelled crown and shining ear-rings? Your restless eyes were charming to look at, and what a winning smile adorned your lips when you talked. Alas! that beauty of the countenance is now gone and it has grown quite dark. It is smeared with blood drawn by Rama's arrows and rendered rough by dust raised by the wheels of the chariot. Alas! I am most unfortunate, and what I never even dreamt have come to pass. I have become a widow. I had great pride in my mind that my father was the king of the Danavas, my husband was the lord of the Rakshasas, and my son was the conqueror of Indra. I had a great sense of security and had great confidence in the prowess of my protectors. But, alack, in spite of such formidable prowess of yours how could an ordinary human being be a menace to us all?

"My lord, your body is tall like a cliff of mellowed hue like that of sapphire, and it was adorned with various kinds of ornaments,—beautiful in amorous sports and quite formidable in the field of battle. Your person with the sheen of various ornaments appeared like a cloud glistening with lightning; it is now

bristling with arrows and smeared with blood, and though its touch is so covetable to me, yet I cannot embrace it. Alas! sharp arrows have pierced your heart and have stained it with blood. Alas! thou liest stretched like a cliff cleft by lightning. Alas, my lord! it is more strange than a dream that you would die at the hands of Rama, but that strange thing has come to be true! You are the death of Death, then, how could you come under his sway? You were lord of the three worlds, all their riches belonged to you, you are the terror of all beings, you were the vanquisher of all, and you did even conquer Mahadeva. You did humble the pride of the haughty. You were the protector of your dependants and followers and slayer of the brave. You did conquer the gods and Danavas and the Nivatakavachas. You did destroy many a sacrifice and abducted by force the daughters of gods, Asuras and of men from various places. You were the cause of grief to your enemy's wives and leader of your followers. You were the protector of Lanka and performed many a formidable deed. You did maintain us in all sorts of luxury, but seeing you slain by the shafts of Rama, it appears that my heart is made of adamantine rock. My lord, you were wont to lie on costly beds, why do you now roll in the dust? I was smitten with intense grief the day when Lakshmana slew my son, Indrajit; but this day I am ruined for good. I shall now lead a friendless and destitute life of sorrow and be for ever plunged in the ocean of grief. You have set forth along an unknown

path, but why do you not take me as your companion? I shall not live without you. Why do you go alone leaving me behind?

"This my ill-starred, wretched self is bitterly lamenting for you, but why don't you console her at all? Are you not angry seeing me thus unveiled and coming on foot up to the city-gate? Look, the veils of your queens, that did protect them from shame, have slipped from them, yet you didn't feel provoked by the sight! I am your companion in amorous sports, but why don't you caress me in love, seeing me thus overwhelmed with sorrow? Those chaste and devoted women whom you rendered widows, surely cursed you with their tearful eyes, and that is why you have been slain by your enemy. Certainly their curse has come to be fulfilled this day. It is said that something evil must happen if the tears of a devoted wife fall on earth, and this proverb has proved to be true in your case.

"O my king! you were a great warrior, you conquered the three worlds, how could you then persuade yourself to steal another's wife? Why did you abduct Janaki by decoying away Rama and Lakshmana, presenting the form of a golden fawn? The past, present and the future were known to you, you were never afraid of battle, then why did you act like that? This shows that your end was nigh. What your truthful, younger brother sorrowfully remarked at the sight of Janaki, alas, has, at last come to be true. This calamity is, alack, due to

your own passions. You are the cause of the ruin of the Rakshasa clan. Nay, you have repaired to heaven with your achievements and failings, you are not to be blamed; it is my womanly nature that accuses you who were not to be daunted. It is due to the defective understanding of a woman that I grieve for thee and lament thy loss. Alas! why did you not listen to the words of your sincere friends and well-wishers? In your pride of prowess you did not pay heed to the words of Kumbhakarna and of my father, and hence, this calamity has befallen thee. Oh, my lord! you were dark, but how beautiful you looked when you did put on a yellow robe and golden armlets on your arms, but, alas, now you lie stretched in a pool of blood! Why don't you greet me today? O king! why dost thou lie so low? You were wont to slay your enemies by that Parigha too dazzling for naked eyes. It was hard as a thunderbolt wrought with gold and was adorned with garlands, but now it lies on the ground broken in pieces! My lord! you lie on the ground embracing the battle-field as your beloved darling, wherefore you do you not care to talk to this neglected me? Cursed be my heart that it does not as yet break in pieces with sorrow, seeing you thus destroyed before my eyes."

The Rakshasa queen, Mandodari, thus bitterly lamenting the loss of her husband fainted on the bosom of her dead lord. Then, she appeared like a flash of lightning illumining a bank of scarlet clouds. Then her co-wives being extreme-

ly grieved at this heart-rending sight, gently raised her from the bosom of her lord and tried to console her with their words, "O worshipful lady! don't you know that a created being is mortal? Don't you know that at the decline of virtue, royal fortune bids adieu and leaves the kingdom?"

With these words, the queens of Ravana encircled Mandodari and cried aloud. Their cheeks and breasts were bathed in tears.

CHAPTER LXXV

THE FUNERAL

In the meantime, Rama said to Vibhishana, "Do thou cremate the body of Ravana and console his wives."

Then intelligent Vibhishana having thought over the matter very carefully, humbly submitted to Rama in words consistent with religion, "O Rama! it is not proper for me to cremate the body of a person polluted with the crime of abduction of another's wife. This king of the Rakshasas bent on evil, was my enemy in the form of a brother. Though in position and age he was to be honoured by me, he was not worthy of my respect. O Rama! I refuse to burn his body. Perhaps the people of the world will call me cruel, but if they know

the whole truth instead of blaming me, they will justify my conduct."

At these words, Rama was highly pleased and said, "O Rakshasa chief, it is due to your endeavours that I have won the victory, it is, therefore, meet that I should do something pleasant to you, and in this connection, I shall tell you everything that I have to say on this point. You see, though the Rakshasa king, Ravana, was irreligious and of wicked character, yet he was a mighty hero. I have heard that even Indra and other gods could not conquer him. Enmity extends up to death and not farther. Our goal has been achieved by his death. You do now cremate his body. He is now to me, as he is to you. You can cremate his body with due rites according to the dictates of religion. Surely you will gain reputation by this act."

Thereupon, Vibhishana came forward for the cremation of Ravana's body and entering the city of Lanka, he released the Agnihotra priests for this purpose. Then he sent forth chariots, priests, fire, sandalwood, scented Aguru, and other scented things. He also sent a large quantity of pearls and gems. Then he came forth with other Rakshasas and became engaged in the act of cremation.

Then, the Rakshasa Brahmanas with tearful eyes dressed Ravana with a piece of red silken cloth and placed his body on a golden bier. The bards began to sing Ravana's praise aloud along

with the trumpets' notes; and all raised the bier decorated with flowers and flags and proceeded towards the south. Vibhishana proceeded at the head and the priests followed with fire deposited in vessels. Ladies of the palace followed carrying in quick paces, but in faltering gait, on account of the want of the habit of walking.

All then arrived at the cremation ground and placed the bier on a sacred spot. The funeral pyre was duly prepared according to the injunctions of the Vedas with red and white sandalwoods, Ushir grass and Padmaka, and over that a deer-skin coverlet was spread. Then the ceremony of the worship of the ancestors was duly performed. The Brahmanas built an altar at the south-eastern corner of the funeral pyre and kindled fire on it. Then, curd and ghee were poured on the shoulders of Ravana, all funeral rites were duly performed. A sacred animal was sacrificed, a coverlet was made of its fat, with which Ravana's face was covered, his body was decorated with garlands of flowers, and then all with sorrowful hearts threw fried rice on his body. Then Vibhishana set fire to the body. After the body was reduced to ashes, he performed the due funeral rites with oil mingled with grass. He consoled the women and asked them to go back. After their departure, Vibhishana humbly returned to Rama.

As Indra was delighted at the destruction of Vritrasura, so Rama felt delighted by slaying

Ravana. Rama then put off the bow and armour offered by Indra and with that his wrath and thus assumed a gentle air.

CHAPTER LXXVI

THE CORONATION OF VIBHISHANA

The gods, Gandharvas and the Danavas having found Ravana slain, returned to their respective places and in their journey they talked of Ravana's valour, the military skill of the Vanaras, Sita's devotion and various other similar things. Rama then permitted Matali to go back to heaven with his fiery chariot.

Rama then embraced Sugriva in joy. The Vanaras praised greatly the prowess of Rama. Lakshmana greeted Rama and, Rama said to him, "My boy! place Vibhishana on the throne of Lanka. He is greatly devoted to me and has helped me greatly."

Lakshmana was exceedingly glad at Rama's words and handing over golden pitchers to the Vanaras, he asked them to fetch sea-water for the investiture ceremony and the quick Vanaras instantly brought water from the seven seas.[1]

Lakshmana then made Vibhishana seated upon an excellent seat and with the help of his friends he performed the investiture ceremony

1 Sapta Sindhu—apparently originally meant the river

with that water. The Rakshasas and the Vanaras joined in the coronation ceremony. Vibhishana thus became the king of Lanka. His friends and followers were greatly pleased at that, and began to praise Rama. Rama and Lakshmana too were greatly delighted.

Vibhishana after consoling the people appeared before Rama. The citizens presented Rama curds, fresh sweets, fried rice and flowers. Vibhishana offered those auspicious things to Rama and Lakshmana. Noble Rama accepted them considering that he had achieved success.

Then Rama said to Hanuman, "O thou noble one! with Vibhishana's leave go to Lanka and ascertain how Janaki is faring now. After assuring her of the welfare of Sugriva, Lakshmana and of myself, tell her that Ravana has been slain in battle. O hero! give this welcome news to Janaki and come back soon with her reply."

CHAPTER LXXVII

SITA'S JOYS

Hanuman being thus commanded by Rama took Vibhishana's leave and entered the city of Lanka. Hanuman then arrived at the garden-house. He was known to Janaki from before.

Indus (Sindhu) with its tributaries that watered the plain of the Punjab, the tract known to the earliest Aryan settlers of India.]

On arriving there he found Janaki dark like the star Rohini in fear of Rahu, and her lustre dimmed for want of toilet. She was seated under a tree surrounded by the Rakshasis on all sides.

Hanuman humbly approached her and stood motionless after greeting her with proper respect. Janaki could not recognise her at the first sight, so she at first remained silent, but when she recognised him she grew cheerful in her heart.

When Hanuman found that Janaki had recognised him, he said, "O worshipful lady! Rama has enquired about your well-being. Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva are all well. Noble Rama with the help of the Vanara army and of Vibhishana has slain Ravana in battle. He is now enemyless and has attained his goal. O worshipful lady! I deliver to you this happy news and let me repeat that Rama has attained victory, and that is simply due to you. The great enemy has been vanquished and Lanka has been occupied. Rama has sent you word that he crossed the sea with the determination of conquering the enemies. Don't be afraid because you are in Ravana's place. Be comforted, he has vested the kingdom of Lanka on Vibhishana, you are now in your own house, O noble lady! Vibhishana too will surely pay you a visit."

Beautiful Janaki having heard all this from Hanuman's mouth, could not make any reply on account of her excessive joy.

Finding Janaki thus silent, Hanuman asked, "O worshipful lady! what are you thinking about? Why don't you speak anything in reply to my words?"

Thereupon, devoted Janaki said with a voice choked with the excessive emotion of joy, "My boy! the happy news of my husband's victory robbed me of my power of speech, I don't find anything worthy of you to reward you for this happy news. I find nothing on earth that I can think sufficient for this, that I may feel satisfied by giving that to you. Gold and all the riches of the three worlds cannot be an adequate reward for this joyful news."

Hanuman was greatly delighted at these words of Janaki and submitted with palms folded, "O worshipful lady! you are ever the well-wisher of your husband and always act to please him. Such words are only worthy of you. To listen to such noble words from you is worth more than gold and jewels, and even more desirable than heaven. O noble lady! since you now find Rama victorious and devoid of anxiety, it is indeed a heaven to me."

Janaki said, "Hanuman! you alone can speak sweet and intelligent things like this. You are the praiseworthy son of Pavana, and you are virtuous. Valour, strength, wisdom, learning, generosity, forgiveness, energy, patience, modesty and other noble virtues exist in you."

Hanuman was greatly delighted by these

words, but not being elated with praise, he humbly said, "These Rakshasis have threatened you all these days; if you so wish, I may destroy them all. They are grim-looking and I have heard that they have oppressed you very much at the commands of Ravana. I wish to kill them as I like. Kindly give me your consent for this."

Then said Janaki, always sorry for the distressed, 'O hero! who can be angry with those who act at another's command and only carry out others' wishes. They are dependants of the king and are obedient to him. I have been suffering on account of my bad luck due to the deeds done in my prior birth. In fact, I am suffering for my own fate. So you should not talk of their death. This is my fore-ordained fate and I knew it from before. I forgive them with all my heart. They used to tyrannise over me at Ravana's commands. Now he has been slain, they will not behave with me in that manner. Listen to me what once a bear said to a tiger,[1] "A wise man never punishes

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1 The story runs like this: Once a fowler being pursued by a tiger, climbed a tree on which there was a bear. The tiger told the bear from beneath the tree, "The fowler is our common enemy, throw him down." The bear said that he could not do that because the fowler was under his protection. The tiger then asked the man to push down the sleeping bear, the fowler agreed to this and pushed the bear, but the bear as he buried his claws in the tree did not fall. Thereupon, the tiger asked the bear to throw down the fowler as he had acted wrongly against the bear. But the bear nobly said, "Though the fowler is guilty, yet I cannot hand him over to you."

a person who commits wrong at the instigation of another.

"In fact, it is desirable to observe this rule everywhere. Character is the ornament of the virtuous. A respectable man (Aryan) always hates a sinner and a condemned person. To speak the truth everyone is guilty of transgressions of one kind or another ; so forgiveness is always commendable. You should not punish even them whose nature is cruel and are born villains, those who delight in doing injury to others."[1]

Hanuman replied, "O worshipful lady ! you are indeed a worthy spouse of Rama. In nobility and accomplishments, you equal Rama in all respects. Now, permit me to return to Rama."

Thereupon, Janaki said, "O gentle one ! I want to see my husband, the protector of the devotees."

Hanuman then said to the delight of Janaki, "O noble lady ! this day you will see the beautiful faces of Rama and Lakshmana. Rama is now free from enemies and is possessed of permanent friends. As Sachi meets Indra, the king of the gods, so you will meet him today."

Thus saying, Hanuman bowed to Sita, the image of Lakshmi, and returned to Rama.

1 Such words were uttered by Christ alone. Is there any wonder then that Sita is looked upon as the greatest ideal of womanhood ?

CHAPTER LXXVIII

THE MEETING

Then, Hanuman appeared before noble Rama and said, "O king! for whom you have bridged the ocean and performed all these great deeds, it is desirable to see that Janaki. That worshipful lady bathed in tears and smitten with grief, after hearing the news of your victory has expressed her desire for seeing you. On account of the former confidence in me, she said, 'I want to see my husband.' With these words she with tearful eyes stared at me."

At these words, virtuous Rama became deeply absorbed in thoughts. Heaving a deep, hot sigh, addressing dark-skinned Vibhishana, he said, "O Rakshasa king! soon fetch here Janaki after giving her a bath and after a change of apparel."

Thereupon, Vibhishana hastily entered Lanka and sent information to Sita by his own wife. Then he himself went there and having joined his palms over his head respectfully observed, "O worshipful lady! be all good unto you. Get upon the chariot after adorning your person properly with the best jewels and apparel after toilet. Rama wants to see you."

Sita said, "O Rakshasa chief! I shall go to Rama even without a bath."

Vibhishana said, "It is better to act according to Rama's directions."

Thereupon, Sita, out of her deep devotion

and love for Rama, agreed to Vibhishana's proposal and then she took her bath, changed her apparel and got upon a palanquin after decorating her person with ornaments and jewels. Thereupon Vibhishana proceeded with Sita carried by the palanquin-bearers and with a large number of Rakshasa guards.

Though Rama came to know of Sita's arrival, he was absorbed in deep thoughts. Vibhishana approached him and said, "O hero! Janaki is come." At this news of the arrival of Janaki, so long residing in the Rakshasa house, Rama was overwhelmed with grief, anger and joy at the same moment, and after thinking a while, Rama said, "O Rakshasa king! let Janaki come near me."

Then virtuous Vibhishana asked all other persons to clear from the place. Thereupon, the warders, with turbans on their heads and canes in their hands, dispersed the male warriors from the place. Those that were on guard, petrolled on all sides. The Vanaras, Bhallukas and the Rakshasas left the place in batches. A great tumult arose. Thereupon, Rama grew angry seeing all thus upset by Vibhishana's orders. He felt for their inconvenience and addressing Vibhishana said, "Why do you put these people into unnecessary trouble for a woman? Not to scare away people is royal pomp. Character is the real protection and ornament of a woman. Besides, it is no offence to see women in distress, disease, in war, in Swayamvara, in sacrifice, and in times of marriage. Now, Sita, has fallen into

distress, it is no offence to see her now, specially when she is by my side. So let her get down from the palanquin and come on foot to me. Let the Vanaras see her in my presence."

At these words of Rama, Vibhishana suspected something serious, and respectfully led Sita to Rama. Lakshmana, Sugriva, and Hanuman were greatly pained by these words of Rama. Janaki seemed to hide herself in shame. Vibhishana followed her steps. She came near her husband and stared at his face. At the sight of her husband's beautiful face after such a long time, her face beamed with joy like the beautiful moon.

Chapter LXXIX

RAMA'S ACCUSATION

Then, Rama asking Janaki, standing humbly before him, said, "Gentle lady ! I have brought you hither after conquering the enemies in war. I have done all that could possibly be done by valour. My anger has been satisfied, and I have avenged my insult. Everybody, this day, has witnessed my prowess. I have fulfilled my promise, and I am now clear to my own self. That the fickle-minded Rakshasa stole you in my absence is due to your fate, but I have absolved you from that calumny. He who does not avenge by his own valour the insult offered to him by his enemies, is a mean-minded fellow. This day, the crossing of the

sea by heroic Hanuman has been crowned with success; the burning of Lanka and other glorious achievements have been fruitful. This day the prowess and counsels of Sugriva have been consummated with success, so also the efforts of him who forsaking his worthless brother took up my cause under my shelter."

At these words, Janaki opened wide her eyes bathed in tears. At that time, seeing that lotus-faced beauty with waving dark curls before him, Rama's heart was smitten with grief, but in fear of public scandal, addressing her before others, Rama said, "In order to take revenge for insult, I have done what a man ought to do, and I have destroyed Ravana under such circumstances. As the great sage Agastya of austere penance freed the southern countries from the terror of Ilval and Vatapi, so I have freed the world from the fear of Ravana. Know it for certain, that it is not for you that I have come to the termination of war with the help of my friends. I have done this for my dignity,[1] for removing the stain of a scandal, and for the prestige and honour of my renowned family. I have done the deed, just to prove that I do not belong to a mean family. I do now, doubt your character for your stay in a stranger's house. You are standing before me, but your sight is unbearable to me, as light to a man suffering from eye-disease, so I tell you to go wherever you like, I do not

1 The original expression means for the preservation of my character.

want you. Who being born of a noble family, can take back his wife who lived in another's house, simply because she is an object of love? You were molested on Ravana's lap, his sinful eyes gloated over your person, now how can I receive you back, thinking of the noble family from which I come?

"The object for which I have rescued you has been fulfilled, now I no longer need you. Go where you please. O noble lady! I say unto you without any hesitation whatsoever, that you can pay your attentions upon Lakshmana, Bharata, Satrughna and Sugriva, or if you like, you may follow Vibhishana.[1]

"Finding you charming and beautiful and having got you in his house Ravana did not refrain long."

Janaki having heard those angry words of Rama, was smothered with grief, as a creeper is torn off by an elephant's trunk. Having heard all these unheard-of accusations in the presence of such a large number of persons, Janaki became mortally ashamed of her own existence, and she wanted to bury herself within her flesh. Rama's words pierced her heart like a dart. She began to shed a torrent of tears. Then she wiped her tears by the end of

1 These expressions are not only cruel, but rude and barbarous to a wife like Sita. Such words do not befit the lips of Rama, even if they were to gauge public opinion and to sound Sita's mind. The character of Rama, as we have already observed before, seems to have undergone a great change from the abduction of Sita by Ravana.

her cloth and told Rama in a gentle voice, broken with sobs, "As a low person abuses a low woman, why do you use all such unutterable rude expressions against me ? I am not what you take me to be.

"I can swear about my character, have faith in my honour. Having seen the conduct of low women, you suspect all women as a class, but that is not proper. If you have any experience of me then give up that unfounded suspicion.

"You see, Ravana touched my body when I was not in my senses. How could I help it ? My fate is to be blamed for that, but what was within my control, i.e., my heart, belonged to you. What could I do about my body, that could be subjected by another person, for then I was thoroughly under another's power ? I am undone, if you could not as yet know me from my love and from the contact of my soul. When you sent Hanuman for my information, why did you not send me the word that you had renounced me ? Then, I could have put an end to my existence even before that Vanara. If it were so, then there would not have been any need for taking such risks to your own self, and your friends could have been spared from all these troubles and sufferings. O king ! being overwhelmed with anger, like a low person, you are thinking me like an ordinary woman. My name is Janaki, because I am connected with Janaka's sacrifice but not because of my birth there, the Earth alone is my mother.

Being unable to judge correctly, you have failed to comprehend my nature. You do not take into consideration why you married me in youth. My love and devotion now seem to be quite ineffectual."

With these words Janaki broke into tears and then addressing Lakshmana, sad and brooding, said, "Lakshmana! just prepare a funeral pyre for me. This is my only remedy in the present trouble. I do not want to live after these false accusations. My husband is not pleased with me, he has renounced me before everybody. I shall now give myself up to the flames."

Then, Lakshmana with a suppressed rage, looked at Rama and having divined the latter's motives from his looks and gestures, prepared a funeral pyre for Sita.

At that time, none amongst the friends dared to talk to Rama, or to look at him; he then looked formidable like Death.

Rama was seated, fixing his gaze on earth. Sita circumambulated him and came near the fire, and after bowing to the gods and Brahma she said addressing Agni, the god of fire, "If I am thoroughly devoted to Rama, then let fire protect me in every possible way. Rama takes a chaste woman for a false one, but if I be pure, let Agni protect me."

With these words, Janaki circumambulated the pyre and then fearlessly entered the flame. Everybody—the old and the young alike—witnessed in pain that Janaki was in fire. That

paragon of beauty fell into flame in the presence of all. The sages, gods and saints saw Janaki leaped into the flames, like an oblation offered in sacrifice.

Women raised a piteous cry seeing her thus fallen into fire, like an angel dislodged from heaven on account of a curse. Both the Rakshasas and the Vanaras raised a hue and cry at that sight.

Chapter LXXX

THE ORDEAL

Then virtuous Rama hearing different persons speaking different things brooded in silent tears.

In the meantime, Yama with the manes of the departed ancestors, Indra with the gods, Kuvera with the Yakshas, Varuna, the god of the sea, three-eyed Mahadeva riding a bull, and Brahma, the creator of all things and the foremost of those versed in the Vedas, appeared on the scene and said to Rama by raising their hands:

"Rama! you are Lord of all and foremost of the wise. Why do you slight Janaki's entrance into the flames? You are Prajapati himself. You are the Lord of the universe and in the former cycle of creation, you were Vasu bearing the name of Krutadhana. There is no ruler above you. You art the eighth Mahadeva amongst the objects of adoration.

"The twin Aswinikumaras are your years, and the sun and the moon eyes. You are present through the beginning, end and the middle. Then why do you forsake Sita so unjustly ?"

Hearing these words Rama said, "I am the son of king Dasaratha and consider myself a human being ; now tell me what I really am !"

Brahma replied, "Rama ! just listen to me, I am narrating to you the true state of things.

"You are self-revealing Gadadhara holding conch-shell, disc and mace in hands ; You are one-tusked Boar.[1] You are Truth and deathless Brahma ; You are ever-existing. You are Virtue to the virtuous ; Your law is observed everywhere. You are four-handed and hold Sanga bow like Death itself. There is no limit to your powers. You are intellect, forgiveness and patience. You are creation and destruction. Saints assign you to be the refuge of all creatures. You are the Vedas with their thousand branches. You are Sacrifice, Vashatkara, Omkara ; there is none above you. You are omnipresent and omniscient. You have a thousand feet, a thousand eyes and hundreds of heads. You hold the universe in you. You lie on the waters of the Universal Dissolution on the bed of the Ananta snake. O Rama ! I am your heart, goddess Saraswati is your tongue, spiritual gods are your hairs, night is the closing of your eyes, day is the opening of your eyes, the

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1 One of the incarnations of Vishnu in which Vishnu raised up the submerged earth with his tusk.

Vedas are your convictions; there is nothing else besides you. The universe is your body, your forgiveness is earth, fire is your anger, and pleasure is the moon. You have bound down Vali and made Indra the king of heaven. Janaki is Lakshmi personified and you are Vishnu himself. You have assumed this human form for the destruction of Ravana. Ravana has been destroyed; now come back to the sphere of the gods. Unlimited are your glory and prowess, and your devotees get everything that is desirable in this life and in the next."

After Brahma had finished, Agni appeared carrying Janaki on his lap. Janaki looked like the glittering moon, she was adorned in red, her dark curls were streaming behind. Fire could not scorch her garlands, ornaments or dress.

The god Agni, the witness of everything, handing over Janaki to Rama, said, "Rama! this is your Janaki. She is stainless. She has not committed any sin by word, action, or thought. Since her forcible abduction by Ravana, she passed her days alone in silent sorrow for your separation. So long she was confined in a harem, so long she was under another's power, but her mind was ever fixed upon you. You are her only prop. Grim Rakshasis frightened her in various ways, oppressed her in different manners, but in her heart there was not even the slightest thought of Ravana. Her heart is pure and she is absolutely sinless. Accept her now: I ask you to do so. Don't suspect her even for a moment."

Then, virtuous Rama, hearing these words of worshipful Agni, was exceedingly pleased and after thinking for a moment said with a cheerful look, "O god! Janaki's purification was necessary. She was long confined in Ravana's harem. Had I accepted her without her purification, then people would have accused me, saying that the son of king Dasaratha is foolish and lustful. However, I do now find that Janaki's heart is pure and full of devotion, and there could not be any stain on her character. She is protected by her own chastity. As the shore cannot be overstepped by the sea, so she could not be overcome by Ravana. That any villain could not insult her even in his thoughts. She was untouchable to him like pure flame of fire. As light is inseparable from the sun, so she is inseparable from me. Now, I cannot renounce her on account of her residing in a stranger's house. She is the purest in the three worlds. O gods! you are adorable beings, and you speak just for my good. Now, I shall protect her for ever."

With these words, heroic Rama received Janaki with delight, and everybody praised him for that.

Chapter LXXXI

THE HAPPY END

Mahadeva then told Rama in well-meaning words, "O lotus-eyed hero! it is really fortunate that you have accepted Janaki. It is a

great relief that you have removed Ravana's terror from the three worlds. Now, go back to Ayodhya, console sorrowful Bharata, and after seeing worshipful Kausalya, Kaikeyi and Sumitra, take up the reins of government to the delight of your friends. Then, after the birth of sons, perform Aswamedha sacrifice and then come back to heaven, after distributing wealth to the Brahmins. Rama! just see, your father, Dasaratha has come in a chariot on earth. He has reached the realm of Indra being redeemed from his pledge by your virtue; just bow down to him."

Thereupon, Rama and Lakshmana bowed to their father seated in a chariot high up in the air, they saw him clad in a heavenly raiment and was glowing with his own effulgence.

King Dasaratha too was greatly delighted at the sight of his dear sons, and taking Rama on his lap, and after embracing him closely, said, "My boy! I tell you the truth, that for you I am enjoying felicity and bliss in the company of the gods. What Kaikeyi had told me in connection with your exile sank deep into my heart. But to tell you the truth, finding you safe and sound with Lakshmana, I have become free from all sorrows, like the sun freed from the mist. My boy! as Ashtavakra saved virtuous Brahmana Kohala, likewise I have been saved by a good son like you. This day, I gather from the words of the gods that you are Vishnu incarnate and have been born as my son for the destruction of Ravana. Kausalya's desire will now be fulfilled; she will see

you happily returned from the exile. The citizens are highly fortunate, for they will see you installed on the throne. My boy! I want to see you now united with pure-charactered Bharata. You have fulfilled your vow and have delighted the gods by slaying Ravana. You have acquired fame by your great achievements. May you enjoy a long life and rule over the kingdom with thy brothers!"

Then, Rama said with joined hands, "Father! be gracious to Kaikeyi and Bharata. You cursed Kaikeyi saying, 'I do renounce you with your son.' Forgive her now." King Dasaratha agreed to Rama's words and embracing Lakshmana said, "My boy! If Rama be pleased with you, you will attain fame and pious merits and heaven at the end. Now attend upon him. Rama is ever engaged in doing good to the world, and all sing his praise. Worship him who is the heart of the gods, and even a mystery to them. You should know that Rama is Eternal Brahma."

Then addressing his daughter-in-law, Janaki, Dasaratha said, "My daughter! don't be angry with Rama beacuse he discarded you at first. He is your well-wisher, he did so, simply for your purification. It is indeed difficult to retain such purity of character as yours, and your fame will cast all other women into shade. I know, you don't require any direction for your devotion towards your husband, still I must say that Rama is your highest god."

Saying all these, king Dasaratha of divine appearance repaired to the heavenly region.

After the departure of Dasaratha, Indra, the king of the gods, said to Rama, "Your sight of us all won't be in vain. We have been greatly pleased with you ; now ask for any thing you like."

Rama then cheerfully said, "O king of the gods! if you are really pleased with me, grant me what I ask of you. Let the Vanaras that have lost their lives for me be revived. I want to see them cheerful again, please restore those heroes to life who despised death for my sake. Let the Golangulas and Bhallukas be again quite hale and hearty, and let them be happy with their wives and children. This is my prayer to you. I do further pray that the places where they live, should abound in fruits and flowers through all seasons of the year, and all the streams will run crystal clear."

Thereupon, Indra said, "This is indeed asking too much, but I shall never retract my word, so this will be done. The Vanaras, and Bhallukas lie scattered with severed limbs and heads on the field of battle, slain by the Rakshasas, will rise into life with sound bodies, as people rise from sleep. They will again be united with their friends and relatives. And their places of residence will abound in fruits, flowers and will be watered by brimming rivers."

As soon as Indra uttered this blessing, the dead Vanaras stood up with unhurt bodies as if from sleep, and everyone was astonished at that spectacle.

Indra and the other gods seeing Rama delighted for gaining his object, praised him along with Lakshmana and said, "O king! now allow the Vanaras to depart, console worshipful Janaki, solely devoted to you, and meet your brothers, Bharata and Satrughna, observing penance for you and console your afflicted mother and sit upon the throne of your kingdom."

With these words Indra and the other gods disappeared in the sky in their brilliant cars

Night then set in, and Rama ordered everybody to take rest and the Vanara army under the protection of Rama and Lakshmana looked like a starry night illumined by the rays of the moon.

CHAPTER LXXXII

STARTS FOR AYODHYA

The night was over, and Rama got up from sleep in an exceedingly happy frame of mind. In the meantime, Vibhishana approached Rama and respectfully said, "There gazel-eyed women skilled in the art of toilet have arrived with scented oil, paints, apparel, ornaments, garlands and sandal-paste. They will look to your bath."

Rama said, "O Rakshasa king! invite Sugriva and other Vanaras to bath. My brother Bharata who has been reared up in luxury with care, is now observing austere vow for my sake; without him bath and toilet won't be pleasant to me; now see that we may start without

delay, for journey to Ayodhya is long and arduous."

Vibhishana thereupon replied, "O prince! I shall reach you Ayodhya within a day. My brother Kuvera had a wonderful chariot named Pushpaka. Ravana occupied that by defeating Kuvera. That chariot now belongs to you. Look, there stands that great chariot like a band of clouds, this will carry you to Ayodhya. Rama! if you wish to do me a favour, if you are pleased with me, if you bear any love and friendship towards me, then you will be pleased to spend one day in Lanka with Lakshmana and your wife Janaki. I have made due arrangements for it, you kindly accept them with your friends and followers. I am your obedient servant, but you have honoured me with your friendship, that is why I have ventured to make that request, but never think that I order you in any way."

Thereupon, Rama replied, "O friend! you have shown me sufficient honour by helping me with your counsels, friendship and by your active services in the war; so do not think that I cannot accede to your request, but my heart has grown restless for meeting my brother Bharata, who came even up to the Chitrakuta to persuade me back to Ayodhya. I have become equally anxious to see my mother, Sumitra, and worshipful Kaikeyi and other friends and relations in the city. Now, permit me to start. My friend, bring me the chariot soon. I have achieved success, it is not proper to tarry any further.

Thereupon, Vibhishana fetched the chariot without any delay. That chariot was wrought in gold and sapphire. A yellow flag was streaming on its top. In that chariot there was a golden cabin decorated with golden lotuses. This had been constructed by the heavenly architect, Viswakarma. Rama and Lakshmana were greatly astonished at the sight of the wonderful car.

Then Vibhishana humbly said, "O king! now tell me what else I shall do for you?"

After thinking for a short time Rama said, "O Rakshasa king! the Vanaras have suffered a good deal; you just entertain them with food and drink. I have conquered Lanka with the help of those heroes; they were quite fearless of death; now they have won success. Prove your thankfulness by offering valuable presents to them. They will return home being honoured and entertained by you. You see, if you be kind, charitable and self-possessed, then all will be obedient to you; this is why I make this request to you. That king who does not know how to gratify his subjects, and for nothing incur heavy losses of life in war, soldiers leave him in fear." Thereupon, Vibhishana gave sufficient jewels and other valuables to the Vanaras.

When everything was ready, Rama took up bashful Sita on his lap and got upon the excellent chariot with Lakshmana. Then after greeting heroic Sugriva, Vibhishana and other Vanaras with due honour, Rama said, "Vanaras!

you have done what a friend should do. I now give you permission to go to your respective places. Sugriva! thou hast done what an affectionate friend ought to do. Now start without any further delay, set out with your army to Kishkindhya. Vibhishana! I offer you the kingdom of Lanka, live there in happiness and peace, and henceforth you won't have anything to fear from even Indra or any other god. I am now proceeding to my father's capital Ayodhya; therefore I offer you my greetings, asking leave to depart."

When Rama said this, Sugriva and the other Vanaras along with Vibhishana said with joined palms, "O king! we too shall go to Ayodhya. Take us with you. We shall roam about in joy through the gardens and groves of Ayodhya. After witnessing there your coronation-ceremony and after greeting mother Kausalya, we shall repair to our respective places." Virtuous Rama hearing their words said, "It will surely be a great delight to me to enjoy the company of friends like you in the capital. Sugriva! soon get upon the chariot with the Vanaras. Vibhishana! just get upon the car with your counsellors."

Thereupon, all boarded the chariot with delight. Then the chariot took off at Rama's order. The Vanaras, Bhallukas and Rakshasas sat there at ease, without congestion.

Then the Pushpaka chariot rose into the sky with a deafening noise. Then Rama looking round him, said to Janaki of moon-like face,

"Look there! my darling, the city of Lanka resting on the Trikuta hill, which resembles the Kailasa mountain. Look! there lies the field of battle muddy with blood and covered with dead bodies. Here both the Vanaras and the Rakshasas have lost their lives. There lies that proud warrior blessed with a boon. There I have slain Ravana for thee. There Kumbhakarna and Prahasta were killed. There heroic Hanuman slew Dhumraksha. There warlike Sushena worsted Vidyunmali. There Angada killed Vikata. There heroic Virupaksha, Mahaparswa, Mahodara and Akampana were slain by me. It was before the construction of the bridge. There stands the sacred shrine, which destroys all sins, and is holy. Now it is revered by all and is known as the pilgrimage of Setubandha. Here the Rakshasa chief Vibhishana joined with me. There appears Kishkindhya, the beautiful city of Sugriva, adorned with fine forests. There I slew down heroic Vali."

Then, Janaki at the sight of Kishkindhya, spoke with bashful love, "O royal master! I wish to take with me Tara and the dear consort of Sugriva and other Vanara ladies with me. Rama agreed to Janaki's proposal and stopped the car even at Kishkindhya. He then turning to Sugriva said, "Sugriva! ask the Vanaras to take their wives to accompany Sita to Ayodhya. You will be prompt to take those women. Let us all go there." Then Sugriva went inside the palace and said to Tara, "My darling! Rama asks you to take with you the wives of the

Vanaras and to proceed to Ayodhya for Janaki's delight. We shall take them to have a sight of Ayodhya and of king Dasaratha's wives."

There, beautiful Tara told the Vanara women that it was Sugriva's wish that they should proceed with their husbands to Ayodhya. "I shall also be glad," said she, "if you go to Ayodhya and see the queens of king Dasaratha."

At this direction of Tara, the Vanara women dressed themselves and got upon the chariot to have a sight of Sita. When they got upon the car, it proceeded as before.

Then Rama pointing at the Rishyamuka hill told Janaki, "There rises the Rishyamuka hill tinged with gold and other minerals, like a cloud illumined by lightning. Here, I met Sugriva and agreed to Vali's death. Look, there stretches the Pampa lake covered with blooming lotuses and its banks are surrounded with beautiful trees. There I lamented and wept for your absence, and on its bank I met pious Savari. There I slew Kavandha. There the Vihanga chief Jatayu, fought against Ravana and died for you. Look, there stands our beautiful cottage in the forest wherefrom the Rakshasa chief Ravana abducted you by force.

"There runs the crystal-watered Godavari. There stands the hermitage of the sage Agastya, surrounded by plantain trees. There stands the hermitage of Sarabhanga. Look, there stands the hermitage of great Atri effulgent as the sun. There I slew huge Viradha. There you met the virtuous wife of Atri. There stands the Chitra-

kuta hill. There came noble Bharata to persuade me to go back to Ayodhya. There runs the Yamuna through beautiful woods. There stands the hermitage of the great sage, Bharadwaja. There flows the sacred Ganga. There stands the city of Sringavera, there lives my friend Guha. Look, now there gleams Ayodhya, the capital of my father's kingdom. Janaki! you have now arrivedat Ayodhya, show your respect to the city."

Then the Vanaras and Vibhishana and other Rakshasas began to survey Ayodhya with delight. The city was adorned with white, high palatial buildings, its high palaces being always frequented by horses and elephants. The Vanaras and Rakshasas looked with admiration at the city which was like a second Amaravati.

CHAPTER LXXXIII

MEETING WITH BHARADWAJA

After the completion of the fourteen years, on the fifth day of the moon, Rama arrived at the hermitage of Bharadwaja. After greeting the sage, Rama asked, "O worshipful master! has any man suffered from scarcity in the city of Ayodhya? Does everybody live there in happiness? Does Bharata justly govern the people?"

Bharadwaja cheerfully replied, "O Rama! your obedient Bharata has placed your sandals on the throne and after administering good to his own house and to others, is anxiously wait-

ing for your return. When being deprived of the kingdom, you repaired to the forest with Janaki and Lakshmana for fulfilling the pledge of your father, I was greatly pained at that sight, but now seeing your prosperity and happiness I have been greatly pleased. Rama! I know all your joys and sorrows. I know what you had suffered during your residence at Janasthana. Ravana abducted Janaki when you were engaged in the protection of the saints and ascetics. I know of your adventure in the forest, also your friendship with Sugriva, the destruction of Vali and other feats of heroism. I know of your meeting with the gods and of their benedictions on you. I have known all these by my Yogic powers. My pupils will carry your news to Ayodhya. Now, receive my blessings. Accept my hospitality and start to-morrow for Ayodhya."

Rama agreeing to Sage Bharadwaja's words, cheerfully said, "Let the trees that stand on the way to Ayodhya bring forth sweet fruits, and let their sweet flavour sweeten the air, even if this be no reason for it."

Sage Bharadwaja granted Rama's prayer. Ayodhya was three Yojanas distant from the hermitage of Bharadwaja. The trees standing along the three Yojanas were bent down with the burden of fruits and looked like the Kalpa trees. All the barren trees brought forth fruits, those that were devoid of flowers were covered with blooms, and those that were dry became adorned with green leaves. The Vanaras, to

their great delight, began to enjoy the fruits and flowers, as the virtuous people enjoy the blessing of heaven. Then Rama thought of the arrangement that he should make for the satisfaction of Sugriva and others. Rama after deciding the course of action said to Hanuman, "O hero! go immediately and learn whether everyone is well in Ayodhya or not, convey my good wishes to Guha, residing at Sringavera. He is like me and is my friend. He will be happy if he hears that my troubles are over and I am quite hale and hearty., He will tell you everything about Bharata and show you the path to Ayodhya. Then after going to Ayodhya, convey good news about myself, Janaki and Lakshmana and tell him that I have attained my object of desire. Then tell him about the abduction of Sita by Ravana, my friendship with Sugriva, Vali's death, crossing the sea, search for Sita, setting out with an army to the sea coast, the sight of the sea, the building of the bridge, the death of Ravana, benedictions by Indra and Brahma, meeting with departed father Dasaratha and the blessing of Sankara, and my return to Ayodhya. Tell all these in detail to Bharata. Tell him further that Rama after the conquest of his enemies is coming back with Sugriva, Vibhishana and his other mighty friends. Observe what expression his face assumes and read his mind, and mark his attitude after he hears these things about me. Gather from his gestures and posture and from his words the real state of his mind. You see, whose mind is not changed by the prospect

of a kingdom? If Bharata wishes for the throne for being accustomed to it, then let him govern the world. O hero! till you approach Ayodhya, during this time go and ascertain Bharata's mind and his doings."

Being thus directed by Rama, Hanuman assumed the form of a human being and proceeded towards Ayodhya. As Garuda goes fast to catch the snakes, so he went fast towards Ayodhya. The hero then proceeded along the sky route of the birds and arrived at Sringavera at the junction of the Ganges and the Yamuna, and after appearing before Guha, the Nishada king, said, "O king of the Nishadas, your friend, Rama has conveyed you his good wishes along with that of Lakshmana and Janaki. He will spend the night of the Panchami at the hermitage of Bharadwaja at the request of that sage and he will come to see you tomorrow."

Saying this to the Nishada chief Hanuman cheerfully proceeded to Ayodhya with great speed. On his way he saw the holy place of Parashurama, Valukini, the Gomukhi, a dense Sala forest and broad highways and crowd of people on them. Gradually he covered a long distance and arrived at the green outskirts of Nandigram. The gardens and trees of the place were as fine as that of the Chitraratha garden of Kuvera. Many a woman was culling fruits and flowers from them. At last, Hanuman saw Bharata in a hermitage, about two miles distant from Ayodhya.

Bharata was leading an ascetic life on

account of the pangs of separation with his brother, subsisting on fruits and roots and putting on a bark garment. His locks were matted and his body was stained with dirt. That spirited prince, like an ascetic saint, was ruling over the world having placed Rama's sandals in front of him, and was protecting the four castes from various troubles. His counsellors, priests and generals were seated before him, clad in red clothes. In fact, the citizens had no inclination for mirth, or amusement by leaving aside that virtuous prince, and Bharata was like piety incarnate.

Hanuman approached him, and said with joined palms, "O king! for whom you thus lead the life of penance, that Rama enquires after your welfare. Banish your sorrows, I have good news for you. You will soon meet Rama. He has slain Ravana, rescued Sita; thus having attained his object, he is coming back with his heroic allies and Lakshmana. And as Sachi accompanies Indra, the King of Gods, so famous Sita is accompanying him."

At this news, Bharata fainted with joy. But he shortly regained his senses and embraced Hanuman in deep affection. He greeted Hanuman with tears of joy and said :

"My friend! be you a god or man, you have come out of kindness to me. What can I offer you for the joyous news you have given? Please accept one hundred thousand cows, a hundred villages and sixteen girls. These girls

are of golden hue, and are adorned with ornaments and they are of good conduct. Their noses and thighs are charming and their faces are beautiful like the moon. They belong to good families of high caste."

Bharata became greatly anxious to meet Rama.

Chapter LXXXIV

RECAPITULATION OF THE PAST

Bharata resumed, "This day, I shall hear again the sweet and affectionate words of that lord, long repaired to the forest. The popular adage that if man lives he may be happy even a hundred years after, now appears to be true. Take your seat and tell me where and how Rama contracted friendship with the Vanaras ?"

Then Hanuman took his seat and began to narrate the incidents of the forest-life of Rama :

"Of course, you know the boons that your mother asked on account of which Rama was exiled to the forest. When king Dasaratha died in grief for his separation with Rama, envoys brought you from Rajagriha. But you were unwilling to accept the crown and you went to the Chitrakuta hill to bring Rama back to Ayodhya. But when Rama refused to break his pledge, you returned with Rama's sandals with you. This much you yourself know, but now listen what took place afterwards:

"The Chitrakuta hill was greatly disturbed on

account of your visit, and Rama from thither entered the deep forest of Dandaka infested with lions, tigers and elephants. When he entered the Dandaka forest Viradha attacked him like an infuriated elephant, but Ramchandra threw him down into a deep hole. That very day, Rama reached the hermitage of Rishi Sarabhanga in the evening. After Sarabhanga's death Rama repaired to Janasthana. While he was residing there, fourteen thousand Rakshasas, inhabitants of Janasthana fought against him, but he routed them within the fourth part of a day, and along with them he slew Khara, Dushana and Trisira. In that Janasthana, Ravana's sister came to Rama, but Lakshmana cut down her nose and ears at Rama's words. Surpanakha then approached Ravana in her agonies. After that, Ravana's attendant Maricha deluded Janaki by assuming the form of a golden deer. Janaki at the sight of that antelope, asked Rama to catch it, saying that it would enhance the beauty of the forest-asylum. Rama ran after the deer with bow and arrows in his hands and killed the same with a single shaft. When Rama was out a-hunting, Lakshmana followed to find him out. In their absence, Ravana came in the asylum and carried away Janaki by force. Jatayu, the king of the birds, resisted Ravana for the rescue of Janaki, but Ravana slew him down. At that time, some great Vanaras were seated on the hill-top and they saw in surprise that Ravana was flying away with Sita in his swift Vimana. Ravana soon reached Lanka, kept Janaki in his palace

and tried to comfort her by various means. But Sita despised all the wealth and allurements of Lanka.

"In the meantime, Rama came back to his cottage after bagging the deer. He was greatly pained at the sight of Jatayu, a friend of his sire. Then, Rama roamed through the forest and the banks of the Godavari in search of Sita. Rama met Kavandha on his way and at his word Rama met Sugriva on the Rishyamuka mountain. Even at first sight there grew a mutual attachment between Sugriva and Rama before any words were exchanged, and their attachment grew deeper by intimacy. Sugriva was driven off by his brother from his kingdom. Rama killed that mighty warrior Vali and bestowed the kingdom on Sugriva. After that ten million Vanaras set out in search of Janaki at Sugriva's command.

"We were long detained in the Vindhya range as we could not find our way. In that mountain Jatayu's brother Sampati lived. He gave us the information that Sita was living in Ravana's house. Then I crossed the sea and found Sita in the Asoka forest. I gave her the signet ring of Rama with the name of Rama inscribed on it and I came back with ornament of her head. Rama revived (as a dying person revived by taking nectar) at the sight of that and by the news of Janaki. He then encouraged the army for the destruction of Lanka. Nala built a bridge over the sea at the command of Rama. The Vanara army crossed the sea by that bridge.

Then a very fierce fight ensued. Nala killed Prahasta, Lakshmana killed Indrajit and Rama killed Kumbhakarna and Ravana. Then Rama had a meeting with Indra, Varuna, Siva, Brahma and king Dasaratha. Gods and saints blessed Rama in joy. Then Rama came to Kishkindhya on the Pushpaka chariot. He is now putting up the hermitage of the sage Bharadwaja. Tomorrow the *Pushya star* will be *in ascendance* and you will see him tomorrow."

Bharata was extremely delighted by Hanuman's words and remarked with joined hands, "At last, after such a long time my desire is going to be fulfilled."[1]

Chapter LXXXV

THE RECEPTION

Bharata hearing this welcome news from Hanuman, addressing Satrughna said, "Let all now worship with music and flowers the gods and the sacred Chaityas of the city. Let bards, chanters of praise, musicians and women of the town go forward to meet Rama. Let the royal mothers, counsellors, the salaried army, regular soldiers, and the forest army and different classes of people—Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and

1 The Epic in spite of its high martial strain strikes a deep note of domestic virtues. The home-life of Rama and others appear to be more charming than the rest. The bond of affection and love that binds the brothers still remains the highest ideal for all times. Bharata is a wonderful image of selfless love.

the chiefs of the clans stir out to see the moon-like face of Rama."

Then Satrughna after dividing a large number of servants into a number of batches asked them to level the uneven ground from Nandigram to Ayodhya, to water the streets and public roads with cold water, to scatter flowers and fried paddy everywhere, to hoist flags from every place, to decorate the houses and streets with garlands, flowers and *patri-coloured* things arranged in an ornamental style, and to have all these things complete before the next sunrise.

On the following day, at the command of Satrughna Dhrishthi Jayanta, Vijaya, Siddhartha, Arthasadhaka, Asoka, Mantrapal and Sumantra were out. Many warriors riding well-decorated elephants, or horses with golden reins, or on chariots, paraded the streets. Then queen Kausalya with her co-wives set out in a car with Sumitra at their head. Pious Bharata proceeded with his ministers, priests, chiefs of the clans, and merchants, accompanied by persons carrying garlands and sweets. Bharata was beside himself with joy at Rama's return, and the bards were chanting the glory of Rama and Satrughna himself blew a trumpet.

Bharata was clad with a humble piece of linen and the skin of a black buck. He carried Rama's sandals on his head, held a white umbrella adorned with wreaths of white flowers, and a royal crown worked with gems and the streets were resounded with the rattling of the

elephants, as well as with the sounds of conch-shells and loud trumpets. It seemed as if the whole of Nandigram followed Bharata at the moment.

Bharata then, turning his eyes to Hanuman said, "Have you spoken anything false out of fickleness incidental to the Vanara race? I do not find worshipful Rama, or any of the Vanaras."

Hanuman replied, "Sage Bharadwaja had treated Rama with great hospitality with various things. It is due to his benediction that trees along the route to Ayodhya have borne sweet blossoms and fruits and are resonant with the humming of bees. Hark, there rises a din of the Vanaras. Perhaps, he has crossed the Gomati by this time. Look, a cloud of dust has been raised behind the rows of the Sala trees; perhaps the Vanaras have entered that forest. Look, there the beautiful Vimana, like the moon. This has been constructed by Viswakarma. Noble Rama has obtained it by destroying Ravana and his brood. Kuvera had got that Vimana by the blessing of Brahma. It is bright as the morning sun. Rama, Lakshmana, Janaki, Sugriva and Vibhishana are coming in that car."

At that moment, a cry rose from all the people assembled there. "There is Rama, there is Rama," the joyous shouts rent the sky. Everybody then alighted from his car, or from his mount, and looked up to Rama seated in the Vimana, as people look up to the moon shining in the sky.

Bharata welcomed him with joy, by joining his hands with respect and worshipped him by presenting offerings to his feet. Large-eyed Rama on the Vimana looked like Indra wielding the thunder-bolt. He was glowing like the morning sun on the summit of the Sumeru mountain. Bharata prostrated himself on the ground before him. Then at Rama's behest the Vimana descended on the earth. Bharata again greeted him with joy. It was after a long time that the two brothers met and Rama embraced Bharata with joy. Then Bharata greeted Lakshmana who bowed to him and welcomed Sita with delight. He then embraced Sugriva, Jamvuvan, Angada, Dvivida, Nila, Rishabha, Sushena, Nala, Gavaksha, Gandhamadana, Sarabha and Panasa in due succession. The Vanaras looking like human beings also enquired about Bharata's welfare. Prince Bharata after embracing Sugriva said, "O hero! we were four brothers, but now we are five and you are one of them. Friendship is born of love, and enmity of injury. You are our dearest friends."

Then after embracing Vibhishana, Bharata said, "It was due to good luck that worshipful Rama found a friend in you, through whose help he succeeded in achieving an arduous feat."

In the meantime, Satrughna bowed down to Rama, Lakshmana and Janaki's feet.

Rama then approached mother Kausalya, emaciated with sorrow and then Kaikeyi and Sumitra and then the priest. The citizens

respectfully enquired about Rama's welfare, and at that time their joined palms looked like so many lotus-buds. In the meantime, Bharata put the sandals on Rama's feet and said, "O worshipful one! the kingdom which you placed as a trust with me, I do herewith make over to you. This day, my life has been blesed and my desire has been fulfilled, seeing you again back in Ayodhya. Now, inspect the treasury and other places of the palace, and the army. For your virtue prosperity has increased tenfold."

Hearing these affectionate words of Bharata, the Vanaras and Vibhishana shed tears. Then Rama taking Bharata on his lap reached the latter's place by the Vimana. After getting down from the Vimana, Rama said, "O Vimana! I direct you to go back to Kuvera to carry him as before."

Being thus directed by Rama, the Vimana proceeded towards Alaka to the north. And then as Indra worships the feet of Vrihaspati, so Rama worshipped the feet of his friend and priest Vasishtha and took a separate seat near him.

Chapter LXXXVI

RAMA'S CORONATION

Then, Bharata placing his hands over his head, as a mark of respect, said, "Arya! you have honoured my mother by going into exile

and by offering the kingdom to me. Let me return the kingdom which you have conferred on me. The burden which only a bull can bear is too much for a calf. As it is difficult to stop a torrent by a dam, so it was difficult for me to protect all the weak points in the administration of the kingdom. I could not follow in your footsteps as an ass cannot imitate the pace of a horse, nor a crow the gait of a swan. If one plants a tree in a garden, and if the tree dies in blossoms before it bears fruits then all his troubles become vain. You are our lord, and if you do not rule over us, then this simile will apply to you. Let the people witness you this day installed on the throne like the meridian sun. May you retire to sleep with sweet music and rise from bed with trumpet notes. Let your empire extend up to the farthest limit of the earth where the sun and the moon shine.

Rama then agreed to Bharata's proposal and sat upon an excellent seat.

Then, at Satrughna's directions, expert barbers adept in cutting hair and beard, with their pleasing touch, surrounded Rama. Bharata, Lakshmana, Sugriva and Vibhishana first took their bath. After that, Rama got his matted locks cut, and after bath he put on a rich apparel and excellent garlands and thereby looked exceedingly beautiful. Satrughna with his own hands dressed Rama and Lakshmana. The queens of king Dasaratha adorned Sita with ornaments, and Kausalya adorned the Vanara women with great affection and care.

In the meantime, charioteer Sumantra, at Satrughna's words, brought an excellent chariot. Sugriva and Hanuman after their bath put on excellent garments and ear-rings and followed Rama, like Indra the king of the gods. Wives of Sugriva and Sita set out in fine clothes to visit the city of Ayodhya.

Asoka, Vijaya and Siddhartha and the other ministers with priest Vasishtha began to consult for enhancing the splendour of the city since Ramchandra had come back. They asked the servants to make all preparations for the coronation of Rama. Having given their orders to the servants, they went to meet Rama.

Then Rama set out in a chariot like Indra for an inspection of the city. Bharata held the reins of the horse and Satrughna held an umbrella over the head of Rama. Lakshmana began to fan him with a palm-leaf and Vibhishana stood by his side with a moon-white chowri. The saints and the gods began to sing praises to Rama.

Sugriva rode a huge elephant named Satrunjaya. The Vanaras in human forms got over the elephants, having decorated their bodies with various ornaments. Rama, surrounded by his kinsmen and friends, proceeded towards Ayodhya, a city of palaces. Conch-shells and trumpets were sounded at that time. The citizens saw Rama coming with his retinue to Ayodhya. They greeted him and prayed for his victory. Rama too greeted the citizens according to their ranks. They followed Rama accompanied by his brothers. Rama being

surrounded by his ministers, Brahmanas and subjects looked like the moon among the stars. The musicians proceeded in front of Rama with their music. As marks of auspiciousness many proceeded with cows, sweets tinged with turmeric and a large number of maids and Brahmanas headed the procession. During the journey, Rama talked about Sugriva's friendship, Hanuman's prowess and the valour of the other Vanaras. The citizens of Ayodhya were greatly astonished at the tales of the prowess of the Rakshasas. Rama, thus talking about those things, entered his beautiful paternal palace inhabited by his ancestors.

Then, Rama gently said to Bharata, "Take Sugriva and other friends to the palace to greet mothers Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi, and assign my sapphire palace to Sugriva for his stay."

Thereupon, Bharata entered that palace. Then the servants at the orders of Satrughna entered the mansion with oil lamps and bed-covers. Then Satrughna said to Sugriva, "My Lord! please send an envoy for the coronation of worshipful Rama. It is now necessary to collect water from the four oceans."

Then, Sugriva handing over the jewelled pitchers to Hanuman, Jamvuvan and other two heroes, said, "See us in the morning with water from the four seas in these pitchers."

The Vanaras at once set out like great birds along the sky. Hanuman, Jamvuvan, Vegadarsi and Rishabha soon fetched water from the four

seas. Water from five hundred rivers was collected. Heroic Susena brought water from the eastern sea, and Rishabha from the southern sea. Gavaya brought water from the western sea, scented with red sandal and camphor. Anila brought water from the northern sea.

Then Satrughna seeing the water thus collected said to the ministers and priest Vasishtha, "Now be ready to begin the investiture ceremony."

Vasishtha and other Brahmanas, thereupon, made Rama and Janaki sit upon jewelled seats. Then Vasishtha, Vijaya, Javali, Kasyapa, Katyayana, Gautama and Vamadeva bathed Rama with sweet-scented crystal water, as the Vasus bathed Indra in the days of yore. Then, the Ritwikas, Brahmanas, sixteen virgins, ministers, warriors and merchants anointed Rama with various liquids. The gods stationing themselves in the sky began to participate in the investiture ceremony. Vasishtha made Rama sit upon a golden throne wrought with jewels, in the midst of the assembly, and then he put on Rama's head a glittering crown with which Manu, and after him, other kings were crowned in successive generations. The Ritwikas adorned Rama's body with various ornaments. Satrughna held a white umbrella over Rama's head, and Sugriva and Vibhishana stood on his two sides with two white chowris. The wind-god at the direction of Indra presented Rama a wreath of hundred golden lotuses and a necklace of variegated gems. The gods and the Gandharvas began to sing, while the

Kinnaras commenced their dance in joy. The earth grew rich with crops and the trees became laden with fruits. Rama gave to the Brahmanas millions of cows and rich apparel and precious ornaments in profusion.

Then Rama offered Sugriva a jewelled necklace bright as the rays of the sun, two armour-plates white as the moon and wrought with *lapis lazuli* to Angada, and to Janaki a pearl necklace, fine clothes and excellent ornaments.

Janaki took out that jewelled necklace and was desirous of offering it to Hanuman thinking of his past services. At that, Rama divining her intention said, "Janaki! give this to whom you like."

Then Janaki offered that necklace to Hanuman, in whom spirit, patience, fame, sincerity, prowess, modesty, morality, valour, might, intelligence and other noble virtues existed.

Hanuman with that necklace, shone like a hill surrounded by white fleecy clouds.

Then, other Vanaras received presents according to their respective ranks. Rama gratified Sugriva, Vibhishana, Hanuman, Jamvuvan and other chiefs with sufficient wealth and victuals. Then he gave fine jewels to Dvivida, Mainda and Nila. Then all departed to their respective places, taking leave of Rama. Sugriva went to Kishkindhya and Vibhishana with his four counsellors to Lanka.

Then, liberal-hearted Rama said to Lakshmana, "My boy! share with me the kingdom with fourfold armies, that has been ruled by

our ancestors, and as they acted formerly as heirs-apparent to the throne, so do thou take the responsibility of the administration."

But Lakshmana did not agree to all these persuasions and entreaties of Rama. Then Rama appointed Bharata as heir-apparent to the throne. Afterwards, Rama performed Aswamedha and Paundhrika sacrifices several times. Rama ruled for ten thousand years and performed the Aswamedha sacrifice ten times. His arms were long reaching up to the knees and his chest was ample and large. Rama reigned in happiness with Lakshmana and performed various kinds of sacrifices with his sons, brothers and relations.

During his reign no woman became a widow. There was no fear of ferocious animals, and diseases were unheard of. The whole kingdom was free from robbers and thieves. Nobody suffered in any way during his rule and the aged had not to perform funeral rites of the young. At that time everybody was happy and virtuous. Nobody attempted to do any violence to anybody out of their respect and love for Rama. People lived up to one thousand years and had numerous children. Everyone was healthy and free from disease, and trees always brought forth fruits and flowers. The god Parjanya rained sufficient rains and the wind blew sweetly. Everyone was pleased with his own trade and followed his own vocation. None spoke falsehood and everybody had an auspicious look. This ancient epic was originally composed by the sage Valmiki. It is founded

on the Vedas. It gives righteousness, fame, longevity and victory to the kings. He who always listens to this epic becomes absolved from sins. He who desires a son, or wealth, will get that if he listens to the account of the coronation of Rama, and a king will conquer his enemies. As Kausalya by Rama, and Sumitra by Lakshmana became famous as fortunate mothers blessed with deathless sons, so women will be famous if they listen to the epic. He who listens to this great epic of Valmiki with due respect meets with no obstacle in life. He lives happily with his near and dear ones and gets his desired boons from Rama. Even the gods are pleased to learn that somebody is listening to the Ramayana. Even the mischievous servants refrain from doing any mischief to their masters. Those who lived far off from their homes also lived in happiness and peace, and women after their menstrual courses bore good sons.

Should anybody read (1) or adore this old history, he or she will be absolved from all sins and will enjoy longevity. Kshatriyas should hear the tale from the mouths of the Brahmanas and they will get wealth and sons. Rama is Eternal Vishnu, Adideva (Prime God), Hari and Narayana.

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(1) The word "read" (Patha) is significant, it proves that the Ramayana was reduced to writing by this time, perhaps in the 2nd century B. C. The passages containing reference to the Buddhists and the Yavana are later interpolations, the inner kernal of the Ramayana was composed perhaps before 500 B. C.

(2) If one reads or hears the whole (3) of the Ramayana, he will be pleased. This History is so very efficacious. Now let good happen to you and glory be unto the Lord. Gods and ancestors become pleased if one listens to the Ramayana. Those who will respectfully reduce this Ramasamhita composed by the Rishi, to wri-

(2) All the terms are names of Vishnu—who envelops the world ; Hari—who takes away everything ; Narayana —who lies on water.

(3) Mark the words : this "whole" proves that the Ramayana is complete here, i.e., the epic ends with the Yuddhakanda, and the Uttarakanda is a subsequent addition by some other poet or poets. Indeed, the Uttarakanda has not only been composed with a different spirit, but, strictly speaking, it does hardly fit in with the preceding cantos of the epic. The epic, both from poetic necessity and from the concluding remarks, clearly shows that the story ends with Yuddhakanda : there is no logical, poetical or moral necessity for dragging the epic beyond this legitimate conclusion. The Uttarakanda was co mposed at a time when Hinduism encountered the menaceof Buddhism, and as a counter-effect of that, it has emphasised Brahminism and the caste system, both of which Buddhism vehemently attacked, and there came a time when caste distinction became almost obsolete in Northern India. But as already pointed out in our Introduction, we shall give a brief account of all the important incidents of that Kanda ; it seems to me, though I am not in a position to prove, that the whole of the Ayodhakanda and portions of the Balakanda and of the Aranyakanda have been composed by one man of supreme poetic genius, perhaps Valmiki, while the rest of the epic seems to have come from different hands.

The first part of the Ramayana—specially the whole of the Ayodhya Kanda—is quite natural, poetic and full of

ting will attain Brahmaloka. If one listens to it his progeny and wealth will increase; he will get a good wife, attain happness and all his endeavours will be successful. By the grace of this Ramayana, one's longevity, health, cure from disease, fame, intelligence, prowess are

human interests. The second part that begins with the Aranya Kanda ends with the Yuddhya Kanda and the latter interlude, the Uttara Kanda, is full of miracles, absurd fantasies, mysterious and supernatural elements.

The Ramayana according to many scholars is only an allegorical poem representing the progress of the Aryan conquests and culture in the Deccan. But the Ramayana seems to me to have been based upon some historical incidents which powerfully and deeply affected the Aryan minds. But we have lost all clue to them. Although Rama's expedition did not produce any visible effect on the Deccan or on Lanka, yet it does not appear to be an absolute myth. The exile of Rama, the abduction of Sita, the death of Vali, the destruction of Lanka appear to have a ring of truth about them. Prof. Jacobi holds a new view of the epic. He says that the Ramayana is based upon the Vedic story of Indra and Vritra. Rama is Indra, Vritra is Ravana. Hanuman, the son of Pavana (Wind-god) is an obedient devotee of Rama, the winds were the friends of Indra in the Rigveda. Sarama, the dawn of the Rigveda, appears as a Rakshasi consoling Sita, the furrow or the goddess of the ploughfield. Indra slays Vritra with his thunderbolt and makes the clouds to pour their rains that will enable the ploughed land to bring forth crops in abundance. I have quoted different views, it is for the reader to accept which appears to be reasonable. In the Uttara Kanda, we come to a new poem altogether tagged to an old, immortal epic, and it will be more and more clear to our readers as we proceed with the poem. In our translation we shall observe the same rules which we have hitherto followed.—Translator.

enhanced, and he will gain good friends, therefore, all virtuous people who are desirous of winning prosperity should listen to the epic with due attention and form.

THE END OF THE YUDDHA KANDAM

THE UTTARA KANDAM

CHAPTER I

AGASTYA'S REVOCATIONS

Once upon a time, after Rama had assumed the reins of the kingdom after the destruction of the Rakshasas, several Munis came to greet him. Maharshi Kausika, Yavakrita, Garga, Galabha and Medhatithi's son, Kanwa, came from the east; sage Swastyatreya, Namuchi, Pramuchi, Agastya, Atri, Sumukha and Vimukha came from the south; Nirshadgu, Kavashi, Dhaumya, Kauusheya came with their disciples from the west; Vasishtha, Kasyapa, Viswamitra, Gautama, Jamadagni, Bhardwaja and the Saptarshis (seven rishis) came from the north. These great sages, versed in the Vedas and the Vedangas, each one effulgent like fire, stood at the gate, and the great Rishi Agastya told the sentry, "Go and tell Rama that we, Rishis, have come to see Rama."

The sentry, well-familiar with all the etiquette and customs of the court, soon went to Rama and said, "O king! the sage Agastya with other Rishis have come."

Rama instantly said, "Go and conduct them here."

Then, the Rishis, bright as the morning sun, entered the royal hall. As soon as Rama saw them, he stood up with joined hands with respect. He adored them by offering water to wash their feet and courteously asked them to take their seats on deer-skins and Kusa grass. When the Rishis took their seats according to their respective ranks, Rama enquired about their wel-

fare. The Maharshis in a body replied, "We are quite well since we find you well and free from all enemies. It is a piece of good luck indeed that you have slain dreadful Ravana with his sons and grandsons. It is, of course, quite insignificant, for if you take up your bow, you can conquer the three worlds; still we consider it to be our good luck that you have slain Ravana. We see you this day victorious and united with Janaki, and happy with Lakshmana and your mothers. It is our good fortune that Prahasta, Vikata, Virupaksha, Mahodara, Vikampana, huge Kumbhakarna, Atikaya, Devantaka and Narantaka have been slain. Destruction of Ravana seems to be insignificant in comparison with your duel with Indrajit and his death at your hands.[1] It is your great fortune, that you have come out victorious from the arrows of that warrior who went about invisible like the tide or time. We have come to greet you at the news of that warrior's death. He was full of dark magic and was invisible to all. We have been greatly astonished at the news of his death. You have achieved victory and have saved us from all fear."

Rama was greatly surprised at these words of the Rishis, and respectfully asked, "Why do you praise Indrajit leaving aside Kumbhakarna and Ravana? Why do you consider him greater than Ravana? Of course, I cannot command you, but if you have no objection, please tell me how Indrajit got his boon and how he conquered Indra. How was the son mightier than the father?"

The sage Agastya said, "Rama! it is desirable to

1 It was Lakshmana who slew Indrajit. Look, what a confusion begins from the very outset.

narrate first the birth of Ravana and his boon and then I shall relate why Indrajit was invincible. In the golden age, there was a Brahmarshi named Pulastya. He was the son of Brahma, the creator of the universe of beings. In virtue, he was like Brahma himself. That sage used to live in the hermitage of Trinavindu by the side of the Sumeru mountain. During his stay, the daughters of the Rishis, Nagas and the nymphs used to sport about his hermitage.

"The climate of that place was always pleasant, and therefore they always visited the hermitage, some of them spent their time in singing, some in playing on Vinas, and some in dancing. That was a great interruption to his meditations. Pulastya was greatly annoyed and said, "Whoever will come within my sight will be heavy with a child." From the fear of that curse, none of those girls appeared before him. But the daughter of the royal saint, Trinavindu, did not know anything about it. One day, she was strolling about the hermitage, but none of her maids was present.

"Pulastya was then reading the Veda, the girl was listening to that reading, and suddenly all signs of pregnancy appeared in her and she grew pale. She was greatly frightened by those symptoms and thought what became of her. In her anxious thoughts, she entered the Asram of her father.

"At her sight, her father asked, "Tell me, daughter, how you have come to look unlike a maid". The girl piteously replied, "I can't say father, why I have grown like this, I went to sage Pulastya's hermitage in quest of my maids. Having found none of them, I was listening to Pulastya's reading when all on a sudden I noticed

these mysterious changes in me. Then in great fear I have hurried back."

"Trinavindu, then through Yoga found that it was the doing of Pulastya. He also came to know the curse. He then took his daughter to Pulastya and said, "O worshipful sage ! please accept my daughter. She has come to you and begs you to accept her out of charity. She is an accomplished girl. When you will feel exhausted from the observance of penance, then my daughter will nurse you."

"Thereupon, Pulastya accepted Trinavindu's daughter. Thenceforth the girl lived with her husband. Pulastya was greatly pleased with her conduct and said, "I have been greatly pleased with your behaviour ; so I wish to bless you with a son after me, he will be famous as Paulastya and since you conceived when you listened to my reading the Veda, he will be called Visrava."

"Shortly after this, that girl was delivered of a son named Visrava. Visrava was pious and became famous for his virtues, and became engaged in meditation like his father, Pulastya. The sage Bharadwaja hearing of his virtues married his daughter Devavarni to Visrava. After some time, Devavarni gave birth to a son. Sage Pulastya was greatly delighted at the birth of Visrava's son and he named the boy as Vaisravan.

"Vaisravan grew like a flame of fire owing to ascetic vows. He considered religion to be the highest thing in the world and he repaired to the forest for meditation. Thus rolled on a thousand years. Then Brahma and other gods appeared before him and told him to ask for a boon. Vaisravan said, "Through your grace I want to be the lord of wealth."

"Brahma said, "Your desire will be fulfilled. I have created Yama, Indra and Varuna, as three lords of created beings, and you will be the fourth, take this chariot glittering as the sun and be one of the gods. We are glad to grant your prayer." Then Brahma and other gods repaired to their region.

"Vaisravan then returned to his father and asked to find a place where he could live in happiness. Thereupon Visrava said, "On the shore of the southern sea there is the Trikuta hill and upon it the divine architect Viswakarma, has built the beautiful city of Lanka for the residence of the Rakshasas. It is beautiful like Amaravati, the heavenly city. The Rakshasas have left that city and entered into Patala, go and live in that Lanka. If you live there, then there will be no harm to anybody.

"Thenceforth, the lord of wealth began to live with the Rakshasas in Lanka, surrounded by the sea. During his reign, Lanka grew prosperous in no time. He used to visit his parents occasionally in his chariot, the Pushpaka. The gods and the Gandharvas sang his glory and the nymphs danced at his place."

Rama was greatly astonished at these words and enquired how the Rakshasas came to live in Lanka before Kuvera, the lord of wealth. Fixing his eyes on the sage Agastya, Rama said, "We have heard that the Rakshasas are born of Pulastya, but you have just now remarked that Lanka was in the possession of the Rakshasas even from before. It now appears from your words that the Rakshasas do not belong to that line of Pulastya. Were they more powerful than Ravana, Kumbhakarna, Indrajit and others? Who was their

originator and what was his name? For what offence did Vishnu drive the Rakshasas from Lanka? Tell every thing in detail."

Agastya said, "Brahma first created water, then for its preservation, all beings were created afterwards.

"When the living beings were created, they asked Brahma, "We have been oppressed by hunger and thirst, tell us what to do." Brahma said, "You preserve water." Then some of the beings said, "We shall preserve (Rakshama)", while some other said, We shall worship (Yakshama)."

Then Brahma said, "Those who have said 'Rakshama', will be Rakshasas; and those who have said, 'Yakshama', will be Yakshas."

Amongst those Yakshas and Rakshasas two brothers named Heti and Praheti, formidable as Madhu and Kaitabha, were born, Praheti was exceedingly religious and he retired to the forest for meditation. While Heti married a dreadful girl named Bhaya, sister of Yama. A son was born to Heti named Vidyutkesa. When Vidyutkesa arrived at his youth, Heti asked Sandhya's daughter for his son. The name of that girl was Salkatamkata. After some time, she was big with child, and as Jahnavi cast off her burden, so she cast aside her burden in the Bandara hill, and joined her husband and became engaged in amorous dalliance.

In the meantime, that beautiful baby began to cry by thrusting his palm into his mouth. At that time, god Rudra was going along the sky with Parvati on a bull. The cries of the infant reached their ears. Rudra blessed the child with immortality and gave him years equal to that of his mother. Then Parvati said, "From

this day on the Rakshasa women will be delivered of their children as soon as they conceive, and their children, as soon as they are born, will attain the age of their mothers." That cast off Rakshasa child was named Sukesa.

Viswavasu Somakantigramani had a beautiful daughter named Devavati. He married her to Sukesa. In course of time, Sukesa had three sons, Malyavan, Sumali and Mali. These three Rakshasas were noted for their prowess. After some time, they repaired to the Sumeru mountain to practise austerity and penance. They observed extreme austerities in their devotion. At last Brahma with other gods appeared before them to grant them boons. Then those three brothers said, "My Lord! if you have been pleased with our penance, then grant us this boon that we may be three invincible lords and remain attached to one another." Thereupon Brahma granted their prayer.

These three brothers being thus invincible began to tyranise over the Suras and the Asuras, and none found any protection from their oppression.

One day those three brothers approached Viswakarma and asked him to build a magnificent palace for them either on the Himalayas or on the Sumeru.

Viswakarma said, "There is the Trikuta mountain on the shore of the southern sea; let me build the city of Lanka over that. Let the Rakshasas live there as the gods live in Amaravati."

The Rakshasas then came to live in Lanka.

The Rakshasas soon grew oppressive. The gods and the Rishis in fear approached the great god Trilochana and complained to him against the Rakshasas. There-

upon god Rudra, advised them to go to Vishnu, as it was not proper for him to destroy the Rakshasas with his own hands. Vishnu being approached by the gods, assured them saying that he would destroy the Rakshasas.

At that time, Malyavan, Sumali and Mali, these three brothers, were the heads of the Rakshasas and many sons were born unto them. Malyavan informed his brothers, Mali and Sumali, of the manœuvres of the gods. Thereupon the three brothers decided to declare war against the gods.

Soon a sanguinary war ensued between the gods and the Rakshasas. Lord Vishnu began to disperse the Rakshasas, as the wind scatters the clouds. Mali rallied the Rakshasa hosts and attacked Vishnu, but Vishnu severed his head with his disc. At the death of Mali, Sumali and Malyavan retreated towards Lanka. But finding Vishnu slaying the Rakshasa soldiers, unwilling to fight, Malyavan wheeled back and challenged Vishnu with spirited words. Then Malyavan and Sumali were defeated by Vishnu. Being repeatedly vanquished by Vishnu, they left Lanka and came to live in the Patala region. Sumali, Malyavan and Mali were more formidable than Ravana, and none but Vishnu could have vanquished them. I shall now narrate to you the birth of Ravana and his progeny.

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF RAVANA

After some time, Sumali left the Patala region and roamed over the earth. With him was his beautiful daughter. During his ramblings Sumali saw Kuvera, effulgent like fire. Sumali was frightened by his sight and re-entered the Patala region. He then thought of the means as to how he could improve his position. With this thought, addressing his daughter, Kaikashi, he said, that she had attained her youth and was past marriageable age and bid her ask Visrava Muni for her husband and to marry the sage of her own accord.

Thereupon Kaikashi went to the hermitage of Visrava. At that time Visrava was engaged in performing a sacrifice; consequently, Kaikashi waited in silence. Seeing her thus waiting, the liberal-hearted Visrava enquired whence she had come and what was her object. Kaikashi then said that she had come according to the direction of her father.

Visrava then replied, "I have divined your purpose. Since you have come at the time of a fearful sacrifice, you will bring forth dreadful sons." At this, Kaikashi said, "I do not ask for such vicious sons from such a virtuous person like you; be kind to me." Then Visrava said, "My beautiful lady! your youngest boy will be after me."

In course of time, Kaikashi gave birth to a terrible Rakshasa. He had ten heads, twenty hands, his colour being dark, like collyrium hue, a wide mouth, thick lips and red hairs. As soon as that son was born jackals began to howl, and other evil portents were seen.

Visrava named this boy as Dasagriva, because he had ten necks. After him, the formidable Kumbhakarna was born, then hideous Surpanakha was born, and after her was born pious Vibhishana.

One day, Kuvera came to see his father. Kaikashi then called her son Dasagriva to have a look at Kuvera and exhorted him to be like the latter. Dasagriva was filled with envy and swore to be more powerful than Kuvera. Then Dasagriva retired to sacred Gokarna and began to practise austere vows with his brothers. Brahma was pleased with their penance and blessed them with his boons.

Rama enquired about the nature of their penance. The sage Agastya then described in detail how Ravana and Kumbhakarna practised austerities for ten thousand years by fasting and how Ravana sacrificed his nine heads into sacrificial fire by severing them one after another and when he was about to sever his only remaining head to propitiate Brahma, the latter appeared before him. Brahma was pleased with Ravana's penance and came to grant him a boon. Ravana asked for immortality, but Brahma requested him to pray for any other boon. Then Dasagriva said, "Let me be invincible and indestructible of the Pakshis, Sarpas, Daityas, Danavas, Rakshasas and of the gods. I do not take other creatures into account. I consider men and other creatures as mere straw. Brahma granted his prayer and offered two more boons, that Ravana would get back his sacrified heads and he would be able to assume any form he liked. As soon as Brahma uttered those words, Ravana got back his lost heads.

When Brahma asked Vibhishana to pray for a boon

Vibhishana expressed his thankfulness for that and said that his heart and soul might ever remain devoted to religion, so that he might always lead a virtuous life.

When Brahma was about to grant boon to Kumbhakarna, the gods requested Brahma to desist from that, as Kumbhakarna was vicious by nature. Thereupon Brahma deputed Saraswati, the goddess of speech, to Kumbhakarna asking her to confound Kumbhakarna's sense. When Brahma asked Kumbhakarna to pray for a boon, the latter prayed that he might enjoy the blessing of deep sleep for a long time. Brahma granted his prayer and his evil genius, Saraswati, left Kumbhakarna. Then Kumbhakarna came to his senses, and thought it was due to the machinations of the gods that he had prayed for such a foolish boon. O king! Ravana and his brothers thus obtained their boons, and continued to live in their father's hermitage.

CHAPTER III

RAVANA'S ASCENDANCY

When Sumali heard of the boons received by Ravana and his brother, he left the Patala region with his four counsellors, Maricha, Prabasta, Virupaksha and Mahodara. Sumali then saw Ravana and told him how they had been banished from Lanka, how they lived in fear of Vishnu, but their days of suffering must now end since Ravana had obtained boons from Brahma. The city of Lanka was in possession of Ravana's brother, Kuvera. Sumali then exhorted Ravana to take the city from Kuvera and rule over the people there. Ravana, at first, declined the offer and said

that Kuvera was his elder brother and such a thing was not proper. Sumali then observed silence. Another time Prahasta incited Ravana saying, "What you once said to Sumali, does not appear quite commendable to me. What is brotherhood amongst heroes? I have something to say on this point. There were two beautiful and affectionate sisters Diti and Aditi. The sage Kasyapa married the two. The gods were born of Aditi and the Daityas of Diti. In the beginning, the Daityas were the rulers of this earth. Afterwards, Vishnu destroyed them and made gods the rulers of heaven.

Ravana, after a little thought, gladly agreed to Prahasta's words, and on that very day started with the Rakshasas towards Lanka. Ravana sent Prahasta as an envoy to Kuvera and asked him to restore Lanka to the Rakshasas.

Kuvera at once consented to leave Lanka as it formerly belonged to the Rakshasas.

Kuvera after leaving Lanka to Dasagriva appeared before his father and asked his advice as to his place of residence. Thereupon, the sage Visrava said that this proposal was formerly broached by Dasagriva for which the sage took him to task. But since Dasagriva did not listen to his words, Kuvera, as he was aware of Brahma's boons, should now retire to the holy region of the Kailasa mountains. The place was beautiful to live. Kuvera readily agreed to his father's proposal and repaired to the Kailasa mountain with his wife, wealth and counsellors.

Prahasta in the meantime informed Dasagriva[1]

1 The writer is persistent in the use of this particular name, which seldom occurs in the main epic.

about the departure of Kuvera. Then Dasagriva entered Lanka with his brothers.

Dasagriva in due time was installed on the throne of Lanka. He married his sister, Surpanakha, with Vidyujjihva.

One day, Dasagriva was out on hunting; he met Diti's son, Maya strolling in the forest with his daughter. He questioned Maya about his wanderings in the forest. On this Maya narrated his story. There was a beautiful nymph named Hema. Happily Maya got her and passed a thousand years in her company. Now for the last thirteen years she was in the region of the gods. He was thus pining for her absence, and for that he was roaming about in the forest. This daughter of his was born of Hema, who also gave birth to two sons, Mayavi and Dundubhi. Maya was in search of a worthy bridegroom for his daughter.

Thereupon, Dasagriva said that he was the son of sage Visrava, grandson of Brahma.

Maya at once gave his daughter in marriage to Dasagriva though Maya was aware of the latter's fierce nature. Then Dasagriva procured two brides for Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana—Vajrajwala, granddaugher of Vairochana for Kumbhakarna, and Sarama, the virtuous daughter of the Gandharva king, Sailusha, for Vibhishana. Sarama was born on the bank of the Manasa Lake. Seeing the waters of the lake rising in the rains, the girl began to cry. Then her mother said, "Sara ma Vardhata—O lake! do not swell." From that time the girl was named Sarama.

Henceforth, Ravana and his brothers began to live in happiness in Lanka. Meghanada was born of Mando-

dari, whom you call Indrajit. As soon as he was born, he resounded the city of Lanka with his cries, like the rumbling of clouds. Hence Dasagriva himself named the boy as Meghanada.

Meghanada began to grow like a flame of fire hidden within the logs of wood.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLOITS OF RAVANA

One day heavy sleep, appeared before Kumbhakarna at the direction of Brahma. Kumbhakarna at once felt drowsy and asked Ravana to build a house for him. A spacious and beautiful building was constructed and Kumbhakarna lay there buried in deep sleep. In the meantime, Ravana began to molest the Yakshas, Gandharvas and the gods, as the wind uproots the trees.

Then Kuvera sent an envoy to Ravana. The envoy came to Vibhishana who received him with due honour, and enquired about the cause of his presence. The envoy then told Ravana that he had been deputed by his brother, requesting him to stop his acts of depradations and vice, and bid him to follow the path of virtue, if possible. Though he had repeatedly violated Kuvera's words, the latter was not angry with him. Kuvera was living in friendship of god Sankara, and at the injunction of that god he requested Ravana to give up his vicious practices and crimes, for the gods were devising plans for his destruction. At these words, Ravana grew furious with anger and said, "The fool has boasted of his friendship with god Sankara. So long I spared him as my brother, but now I shall conquer him by

might." With these words Dasagriva killed the envoy with a stroke of his sword.

Afterwards, proud Ravana set out with Prahasta, Mahodara, Maricha, Suka, Sarana and Dhumraksha, for the conquest of Kuvera. A great battle ensued between Kuvera and Ravana.[1] Both the Yakshas and the Rakshasas showed their great valour and might. But Kuvera was worsted at last, and Ravana brought down the Pushpaka chariot, as a booty of his triumph, swift as the flight of thought.

Victorious Ravana was returning in triumph towards Lanka, but suddenly the Pushpaka was stopped. As Ravana was enquiring about the cause of this sudden stoppage, a grim figure with a shaven head, short arms and of brown colour fearlessly approached Ravana and asked him to go back as god Mahadeva was dallying in amorous sports with Parvati in that forest. This was Nandi. These words of Nandiswara enraged Ravana. He jumped down from the Pushpaka and went to meet Mahadeva. But as he proceeded he found Nandiswara standing with a trident like a second Mahadeva. Ravana laughed at the hideous monkey-like face of Nandi. Thereupon, Nandi grew angry and said, "Since you laugh at my simian visage for the destruction of you as well as of your brood, formidable apes will be born on earth ; I could have slain you just now, but your vices will effect your ruin ; hence I refrain from it."

As soon as these words were uttered, the gods rejoiced in heaven. But Ravana paid no heed to

1 The fight is a repetition of the battle between Rama and Ravana and nothing else.

Nandi's words and said that since the mountain obstructed the course of the Pushpaka, he would at once pull down the rock. Ravana then tore down the rock, the denizens of the Kailasa began to tremble with fear. But Mahadeva then pressed the rock with the light pressure of his toe, and Ravana cried out under its tremendous pressure. The counsellors of Ravana were struck with panic and asked Ravana to appease Mahadeva. Thereupon, Ravana began to sing the glory of Mahadeva in devotion. Mahadeva was pleased at this and said, "Since you frightened the three worlds with your tremendous cries, you will be called Ravana." Ravana then prayed for a weapon by which he would be able to conquer all. Thereupon Mahadeva presented Ravana with a formidable sword named Chandrahasa, and asked him never to slight the sword for in that case it would return to Mahadeva. Then Ravana got upon the chariot after paying due respects to Mahadeva.

One day, when Ravana was strolling in the Himalayas, he saw a beautiful young girl engaged in penance. Ravana approached her and declared that such austerities were not worthy of her beauty and youth, and he enquired who she was. Thereupon the girl replied that she was the daughter of Rajarshi Kusadhwaja, and her name was Vedevati. Many worthy suitors sued for her hands, but her father wanted to marry her to Vishnu. At this the Daitya Chief Sumbha in wrath slew her father at night. Her mother burnt herself on the funeral pyre of her husband. She was henceforth engaged in prayers to revenge her father's death. The girl then asked Ravana to go away. But the Rakshasa king was smitten with love and said what was Vishnu

in comparison with him. Vedavati asked Ravana not to vilify Vishnu, the lord of the Universe. Thereupon Ravana forcibly seized her by the hair. Vedavati then kindled a fire to burn herself for that insult. Vedavati said, "Thou wicked villain! since you have insulted me by seizing me by the hair, I shall be reborn for your destruction, though of course it is not possible for a woman to slay a wicked man. If I destroy you by my curse, then the merits of my penance will be diminished. However, if I have done any act of virtue, if I have been devout at all, then, I shall be born unto a virtuous man like his daughter though not born of any woman's womb."

With these words Vedavati entered the flame. Flowers were showered from heaven. O Rama! that Vedavati is the daughter of Rajarshi Janaka and is your wife. You are Vishnu incarnate. The enemy whom Vedavati was about to destroy by the fire of her wrath has been destroyed by the prowess of your arms. This Vedavati like a flame of fire will rise (be born) again and again from the ploughed field.

CHAPTER V

FEATS OF RAVANA

After Vedavati had entered into the flames, Ravana, king of Rakshasas, began to wander over the earth in his Pushpaka chariot. In the course of his wanderings, Ravana saw in the province of Usiravija, king Marutta engaged in a sacrifice with the Devas. Saint Samvarta, brother of Vrihaspati was engaged as a priest in that sacrifice. Seeing that invincible Raksha, Indra

assumed the form of a peacock; Yama that of a crow; Kuvera that of a lizard; and Varuna the form of a swan. Other gods too disguised themselves in the forms of different animals. In the meantime, Ravana entered the sacrificial ground in the form of an unclean dog and addressing king Marutta said, "Either fight with me, or acknowledge defeat at my hands."

Marutta asked, "Who are you?" Ravana said, he was Ravana, the younger brother of Kuvera, and that he had captured the Vimana by vanquishing Kuvera. Marutta said, "Thou art really a worthy person since thou hast conquered thy elder brother, but wait, I shall soon despatch thee to the region of death."

King Marutta with these words set out with bow and arrows. At that, priest Samvarta prevented him saying that if the sacrifice remained incomplete there would come the end of his life; moreover, he was engaged in a sacred sacrifice, why should he then surrender himself to wrath? Thereupon, Marutta desisted from fighting. The Rakshasa counsellor Suka exclaimed victory to Ravana, and Ravana began to devour the Rishis. Ravana, then, again set out in his journey. After the departure of Ravana, the gods assumed their own forms. Indra then addressing the peacock said, "I have been highly pleased with you and henceforth you won't have any fear of snakes. Hundreds of eyes will adorn your tail, and when I shall pour forth heavy rains you will feel greatly delighted. These are the tokens of my pleasure. O king! formerly the tail of the peacock was simply blue, but since that boon it came to be adorned with eyes."

Then Yama, the lord of death, said to the crow,

"I have been immensely pleased with you. You will not feel the agonies of death, that are suffered by other creatures. By my blessing you won't have any fear of death. You will live so long as you are not killed by man." Then Varuna said to the swan, "I am much pleased with you. Your colour will be white as foam and the moon. You will live happily in water." O king! formerly, the colour of the swan was not faultlessly white in every part. Kuvera said to the lizard that it would always shine like gold. Thus blessing the animals in various ways the gods retired from Marutta's sacrifice.

In the meantime, Ravana went round the world and challenged every powerful chief to battle and asked them either to fight, or to acknowledge defeat. Prudent and virtuous kings after deliberations said that they acknowledged his prowess. In this way kings Dushyanta, Suratha, Gadhi, Gaya, Purarava and others acknowledged defeat.

Ravana then arrived at Ayodhya, the capital of Anaranya and challenged the latter to fight.

Anaranya was highly incensed at that audacity. A severe fight ensued between the two, but the Kshatriyas were defeated by Ravana. Ravana taunted Anaranya for his self-confidence and his ignorance of Ravana's prowess. Anaranya, however, meekly submitted saying, "O Rakshasa! what could I do, since fate is formidable. Why do you brag in vain? It is Time that is responsible for my defeat and you are only an instrument for it. But I want to speak something about this insult offered to the Ikshvaku line. If I have practised any religious rite at all, then my words will come to pass.

Then Ravana rescued by force all persons from hellish tortures. The sinners were delightfully surprised; but the minions of Death, the ghosts and goblins, at once attacked Ravana for his interference and a tremendous noise was heard and a terrible confusion fell upon hell.

Warlike Ravana then discharged his arrows at the attendants of Yama. In the course of fighting the hosts of Yama became worsted, and Yama, from the victorious shouts of the Rakshasas, could understand that his followers had been defeated by Ravana. Yama then himself went to fight against Ravana. Yama ascended his chariot. In front of him stood Death itself with a formidable mace, and by his side was the Fire—like the fatal sceptre of Time. All creatures became terrified; even the gods were frightened by it, but Ravana was undismayed. A severe fight ensued between Yama and Ravana and it lasted for several nights. Ravana pierced Death with four arrows, the charioteer with seven and with countless shafts the chest of Yama. Then Death in wrath said to Yama, "O king! just give me leave, I shall immediately destroy this wicked Rakshasa. It is my nature, that whoever will come within my sight will never survive. I have destroyed Hiranyakasipu, Namuchi, Sambara, Nishandi, Vritra, Dhumaketu, Vairochana, Vali, Daitya-king Shambhu, Vana, Rajarsha, Gandharvas, Uragas,

traditions about heaven and hell representing the latter as the region of all sufferings and woes; it is only Dante that has displayed wonderful originality in his conceptions, specially about his Purgatory and Inferno. Of course we cannot expect such sublime and beautiful things from a third-class poet aster of the Uttara-Kanda.

Rishis, Yakshasas, Pakshis, Apsaras, and, what is more, at the time of universal destruction I have destroyed the earth with everything on it. What to speak of Ravana ?" Yama asked Death to stop, saying that he would himself destroy Ravana. With those words Yama raised his fatal sceptre. Ravana was scorched by the intense glare of the sceptre.

In the meantime, Brahma appeared on the spot and said that Ravana had been rendered invincible by his own boon, and so his words prove false if Yama killed Ravana. Hence Yama held back the fatal sceptre. Since Brahma was their chief, Yama withdrew from the field of battle and Dasagriva issued forth victorious from the region of Yama ; and the gods with Brahma repaired to the heavenly region.

CHAPTER VI

THE VICTORIOUS CAREER OF RAVANA

After conquering Yama, Ravana met the Rakshasas with a bleeding body. Maricha and others hailed Ravana with joy for his great victory.

Ravana then got upon the Pushpaka chariot and entered into the ocean for getting into the Patala[1] region—the abode of the Uragas. Ravana entered Bhogavati, the city of Vasuki and reduced the Nagas to submission. Thence Ravana proceeded to the City of Jewels, it was the home of the Daityas called Nivatakavachas. The

1 Some are of opinion that Patala means America, it was called Patala because it is on the opposite side of Asia. Some Hindu relics have been discovered in the jungles of America.

Rakshasas challenged them to battle. The Nivatakavachas were exceedingly powerful, and a terrible fight ensued between the two.

In the meantime, Brahma appeared and asked the Nivatakavachas to desist from the fight and to conclude peace with Ravana. Ravana then made friends with the Nivatakavachas and learnt various kinds of black magic from them.

From that place Ravana came to the city of Ashmana where lived a class of Daityas named Kalakeyas. Ravana with Vidyutjjihva—husband of Surpanakha—destroyed the mighty Kalakeyas.

Thence, Ravana proceeded to Varuna Puri. It was white like Kailasa mountain, there lived Kamadhenu[1] Surabhi and from the flow of her milk, the ocean of milk had been created. From that rose the silvery moon, and Swadha of the ancestors and nectar. Ravana wheeled round Surabhi and entered the city of Varuna. He was prevented by the sentries, but he overpowered them soon, and asked them to inform Varuna about his challenge to a fight. At that, the sons and grandsons of Varuna became incensed and bravely faced Ravana with their men, but they were worsted in fight. Ravana then asked the sons and grandsons of Varuna to inform Varuna of his advent. Thereupon, Prahasa, Varuna's minister, said that Varuna had gone to Brahmaloka for hearing music. Then Ravana proclaimed his name in the city and issued forth elated with the joy of victory.[2]

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1 A cow that could give anything asked of her.

2 Five episodes have been interpolated after this.

In the first episode, Ravana encountered a terrible

In this way Ravana roamed about the earth, spreading terror to all. Whenever he found any beautiful woman he forcibly abducted her putting her relations to death. As the ocean is swelled by the waters of the rivers, so tears of desolate women filled his chariot. Dark tresses of these captive women were long, faces like the moon, breasts hard and plump, their waists slim, hips heavy, and their colour was like gold. They looked like so many daughters of the gods. Their sights rendered the chariot hot. They all looked sad, each one was lamenting her lot. It is a sin to abduct another's wife and Ravana was doomed for this act of impiety.

Ravana thus came back to Lanka after conquering the world. Then a sister of Ravana came to him with tears in her eyes and said that it was for Ravana that she had become a widow, for her husband was killed amongst the Kalakeyas, whom Ravana conquered by his prowess. Ravana apologised to his sister, saying that he did it without knowing the thing and asked her to

dark man who challenged him to a fight. Ravana grew nervous and was frightened by his very sight. That man was a sentry of Vali. Ravana appeared before Vali, kept under bondage by Hari. In the second episode, the sun-god acknowledges supremacy of Ravana. In the third episode Ravana fought with king Mandhata of Ayodhya in the Chandraloka, and at last peace was concluded between the two by the interference of Maharshis Pulastya and Galava. In the fourth episode, when Ravana was about to smother the moon, Brahma appeared and asked Ravana to desist and gave him a Mantra to avoid death, the mantra consists of a hymn to Mahadeva. In the fifth episode, Ravana met with his defeat at the hand of Kapila whose each and every limb seemed to be a god transformed into it!

go and live with Khara, her mother's sister's son, who would always look to her wishes. Then Khara with fourteen thousand Rakshasas entred the Dandaka forest, and Surpanakha lived with him in happiness.

CHAPTER VII

MEGHANADA'S SACRIFICE

One day Ravana entered Nikumbhila and found Meghanada engaged in a sacrifice. Ravana deeply embraced Meghanada and asked what he was doing. At that time, Meghanada was observing silence so he did not make any reply.

Sukracharya just to prevent Meghanada from breaking his vow of silence said, "O king! I shall tell you everything. Your son has performed seven sacrifices named Agnishtoma, Aswamedha, Rajasuya, Gomedha, Vaishnava and others.

Having performed the difficult sacrifice of Maheswara, he has obtained boons from Pashupati himself. He can go wherever he wishes, he can live in the sky and he has obtained Tamasi Maya. By this Maya, darkness is produced, and for that none can know anything. Besides these, this great hero has obtained an invincible bow, an inexhaustible quiver and formidable weapons for the destruction of the enemy. The sacrifice will be completed this day, and we were waiting for you."

Ravana said, "You have not done well by worshipping Indra and other gods with sacrificial things. However what is done cannot be undone. Now let us return home."

Then Ravana, Indrajit and Vibhishana entered the palace and got beautiful women down from the chariot. Seeing Ravana greatly attached to those women, Vibhishana said, "You have committed such sinful acts for the destruction of your family and fame. You have forcibly abducted all these women by causing pain to others, but here warlike Madhu has taken away Kumbhinasi."

"What is all this," said Ravana, "I do not know anything about it."

"This is the result of your own misdeed," angrily replied Vibhishana. Malyavan is the elder brother of our maternal grandfather, Sumali. Kumbhinasi is his grand-daughter and the daughter to Anala, our maternal aunt; hence she is our cousin. Madhu has taken her away by force. At that time, Indrajit was engaged in sacrifice and myself in meditation in the water, and Kumbhakarna, in deep sleep. When I came to know of this, I forgave Madhu, thinking that our cousin had got a worthy spouse."

Ravana was beside himself with rage and issued orders for immediate mobilisation against Madhu. The mighty Rakshasa army got ready for the fight. Indrajit was in the vanguard, Ravana in the middle and Kumbhakarna in the rear. Vibhishana remained in Lanka. Seeing them going against the gods, the Daityas who were sworn enemies of the gods started against the latter.

Ravana on reaching Madhupur could not find Madhu, but his sister Kumbhinasi threw herself in fear at the feet of Ravana. Ravana pardoned her and asked what he could do for her. Kumbhinasi asked Ravana

to spare her from the pangs of widowhood. Ravana granted her request and asked where Madhu was. Kumbhinasi then roused Madhu from sleep and introduced Ravana to him, and asked Madhu to help Ravana, his brother-in-law, in his campaign against the gods. Madhu agreed and appeared before Ravana and asked him to accept his hospitality.

Ravana then encamped his army on the Kailasa mountain.

CHAPTER VIII

THE EPISODE OF RAMBHA

The sun had set, and the white moon shone over the hill. The army was enjoying the sweet balm of sleep. At that time, Ravana got upon a peak and surveyed all round him. Ravana saw at a distance bright clusters of Karnikara, Kadamva, Vakul, Champaka, Asoka, Punnaga, Mandara, Chuta, Patala, Lodhra, Priyangu, Arjuna, Ketaka, Tagara, Piyala and other forest-flowers decorating the valley. The Kinnaras were singing sweet songs of love, and intoxicated Vidyadharas were sporting in amorous dalliance with women, with eyes red with wine. The nymphs were singing at the court of Kuvera, and their silvery notes, like the sweet jingling of bells, could be heard. Summer-flowers were fluttering in the breeze and the whole place with their rich fragrance, and many blossoms loosened from their stalks silently covered the green. Sweet-scented breeze began to fan the amorous flame of Ravana. Ravana was then completely under the spell of sweet music, the beauty of flowers and the hill and the touch of the delightfully cool breeze. Ravana heaved sighs again and again.

At that time, Rambha, beautiful like the full moon, was going through the army line. Her body was smeared with sandal, and her head was crowned with a garland of Mandara flowers. She was going to enjoy herself with the gods. Her heavy hips were adorned with a strong girdle, her eyes were beautiful, as if inviting amorous sports. With sandal-paste and ornaments of summer-flowers she looked like a second Lakshmi. She had a thin blue cloth on. Her face was like the moon, brows drawn like two bows, thighs round and tapering like the trunk of an elephant, and palms soft like tender leaves. Ravana was at once smitten with lust and caught hold of Rambha, cast down with shyness. Ravana asked, "O my beauty ! whither are you bending your steps ? For whose enjoyment are you going ? Who is that fortunate person ? Your lips are sweet and fragrant like the petals of a lotus ; who will drink their honey ? Your breasts are like two golden pitchers, hard and beautiful ; who will enjoy their delightful touch ? Your thighs are like two golden pillars ; who will mount over them ? None amongst the gods is fortunate like me, should not, therefore, leave me behind. Just take your rest on the rock. I am lord of the lords of the heaven. Please fulfil my prayer."

Rambha trembled at these words of Ravana. She said, "Be propitious to me. You are my object of reverence. I am, in fact, your daughter-in-law."

Ravana said, "If you be my son's wife, then you are my daughter-in-law indeed."

Rambha said, "Nalakuvera is the dear son of Kuvera, your brother, that Nalakuvera has sent for me and I am going to him. He is virtuous and he is waiting for me. Kindly let me go."

"O my beauty! you are describing yourself as my daughter-in-law, signifying thereby that you are the only wife of your husband. But nymphs have no husbands, even the gods treat them as their wives."

With these words, Ravana threw Rambha down on the ground and began to enjoy her.

After her release from Ravana's embrace, Rambha looked like a river rendered turbid by an elephant. Her tresses became loose, her garland and ornaments slipped from her. Rambha came to Nalakuvera, threw herself at his feet and narrated everything to him.

Nalakuvera then by his Yogic power found out the truth and uttered a deep curse on Ravana, "My gentle woman! Ravana has used force upon you against your will; henceforward if he uses force upon any woman against her will his head will instantly burst into pieces."

As soon as the curse was uttered, shouts of jubilation were heard in heaven, and all chaste women were extremely delighted at Nalakuvera's curse.

CHAPTER IX

RAID AGAINST HEAVEN

Ravana then arrived at Indraloka. Indra grew anxious at the news of Ravana's arrival and asked Adityas and other gods to get ready to fight against Ravana.

Indra being greatly smitten with fear went to Vishnu for his advice as to how he could win victory over Ravana. Vishnu said, that Ravana was invincible on account of Brahma's boon and so he could not accede to Indra's request to destroy Ravana. Vishnu assured Indra that he would kill Ravana afterwards, but not

now. He advised Indra to fight against Ravana in the meantime.

Then all the gods gathered for fighting against Ravana, and a terrible battle commenced between the gods and the Rakshasas. Both were inexhaustible in battle.

Indra and his son Jayanta fought bravely along with the Vasus and other gods. But Meghanada was more than a match for them. He smothered all the gods by his wonderful prowess.

Indra fought resolutely against Ravana, but in vain. Meghanada availed himself of his black art and made himself invisible. Indra became exhausted and Meghanada took him captive by his magic. Then the Rakshasas ceased from fighting, and Ravana and Meghanada repaired to Lanka with Indra as their prisoner.

After the defeat of Indra by Meghanada, all the gods headed by Brahma came to Lanka. Ravana was then seated in the throne-room surrounded by his sons and brothers.

Brahma said, "My boy, Ravana! I have been much pleased with your son Meghanada, he has conquered heaven by his prowess. I have been really astonished by his valours and generosity. Meghanada will henceforth be known as Indrajit. He will be invincible in war; now release Indra, and tell me what you want from the gods for this release."

Indrajit said, "O Lord! give me immortality as ransom for Indra's release."

Brahma said, "There is none immortal on earth; ask for some other boon."

Indrajit said, "O Lord, if I do not get immortality,

then I ask for another boon for the release of Indra. When I shall worship fire with due rites, and shall set out for the conquest of my enemies, a chariot yoked with steeds will rise from the fire and none will be able to slay me so long as I shall be seated in that chariot; but I shall be destroyed, if I be engaged in fight before the completion of my worship with due rites. Everybody asks for immortality by virtue of *tapas*, but I wish to attain that by my valour."

Brahma said, "My boy! your prayer will be granted."

Indra was then released and the gods went to heaven with Indra.

From that time Indra became morose and pensive. Brahma then told Indra that his defeat was due to the curse uttered against him by Gautama, for his violation of Gautama's wife, Ahalya. Brahma asked Indra to perform the Vaishnava sacrifice and he would be purified by it. He further told Indra that his son, Jayanta was alive living with the Danava-king, Puloma. Indra performed the sacrifice and began to rule over heaven.

Rama and Lakshmana expressed their great surprise and admitted that valour and prowess of Indrajit were indeed wonderful.

Vibhishana observed that what sage Agastya had said was perfectly true.

CHAPTER X

RAVANA'S DISCOMFITURE

Rama then asked Agastya, "When Ravana was thus tyrannising over the world, was there no hero living? Was there no Kshatriya king?"

Agastya said, "Once upon a time Ravana arrived at Mahishmati city. Its king, Arjuna, was formidable like Fire-god. When Ravana reached the city, the Haihaya king was out sporting with women in the Narmada stream. Ravana then came to the Vindhya mountain, hearing that Arjuna was sporting with women in the Narmada. Ravana then came to the Narmada. The river Narmada lay before him like a beautiful woman—the flowery plants on its banks were its scarf. Chakravaka couple its breasts, spacious banks its thighs, rows of ducks and swans its girdle, pollens of flowers its cosmetic, foam its white cloth and the blooming lotuses its eyes !

"Ravana got down from his chariot and entered into the pleasant stream for bath. Ravana greatly admired the beauty of the Narmada. He asked his men to take their bath, and himself began to worship Siva on its bank.

"At a little distance from that spot, Arjuna was sporting with woman. Arjuna stopped the current by the force of his arms. The river swelled up and water rose above the banks ; Ravana enquired of his men about the cause of this sudden rise of the river. Suka and Sarana, Ravana's councillors reported to Ravana about the real cause. Ravana then went to fight against Arjuna and challenged him to a fight. Arjuna's followers asked Ravana to accept their hospitality for the night and to fight in the morning. But Ravana's followers overcame their resistance. When Arjuna heard of the defeat of his men, he was beside himself in rage, and at once chased the Rakshasas with his mace. Ravana came forward and began to fight with all his might, but

Arjuna became victorious and entered his city, taking Ravana a prisoner with him.

"Sage Pulastya heard of Ravana's discomfiture and being moved by fatherly affection came to Arjuna and prayed for his release. Arjuna considered himself fortunate for his visit and at once agreed to Ravana's release. In this world there are mighty people, but there are mightier, so a prudent man should not despise anybody."

Ravana soon forgot the ignominy of defeat by being well-treated by Arjuna, known as Kartaviryarjuna. He was again out in his conquering tour and arrived at Kishkindhya. At that time, the king of Kishkindhya, Vali, was not in the city, but was engaged in meditation and in evening-rites on the shore of the Southern Sea. Ravana hastily arrived there, but Vali ignored his presence as the lion does that of a rabbit. Vali then thought of taking Ravana within his grasp and to repair to other three seas with him. As Ravana came near Vali, Vali remained silent, he did not break the chanting of Vedas, but silently took Ravana in his clutch and rose up in the sky. The followers of Ravana ran after Vali, to release Ravana from Vali's grasp. Vali performed his Sandhya rites on the banks of the four oceans without any hurry; and after that, Vali arrived at the garden of Kishkindhya and released Ravana from his clutch. Ravana was greatly surprised by Vali's prowess and contracted friendship with him, in presence of sacred fire. Vali's prowess was unlimited, but you have killed that Vali."

Rama then humbly submitted that undoubtedly Ravana and Vali were exceedingly mighty, but their

might could not be compared with that of Hanuman, and he cited the heroic deeds of Hanuman.

Agastya agreed with Rama, but said that Hanuman was ignorant of his own prowess due to a curse. Agastya then said how Hanuman after his birth, jumped for catching the bright sun thinking it to be a red ripe fruit. At that, Rahu was mightily frightened and informed Indra about the encroachment upon his ancient region. Indra came out in hurry. Hanuman again jumped for Rahu, Rahu moved away in fear. Indra not finding Rahu struck Hanuman with his thunderbolt. The wind-god was greatly angry at this and began to injure the creation. Brahma then brought about a conciliation between the two.

Indra put a jewelled necklace on Hanuman's neck and said that Hanuman would not die stricken by thunderbolt. The Sun-god gave him energy; Varuna, Yama, Kuvera and Sankara blessed the child. Brahma told Wind-god that Hanuman would be accomplished in all the Shastras, would be invincible in battle and would be immortal and the curse of Brahmins would not affect him. Hanuman began to molest the Rishis in pride of his boons. Then the Rishis of Bhrigu and Angirasa lines cursed Hanuman that he would forget for a long time his real prowess. When there was a fight between Sugriva and Vali, Hanuman was on Sugriva's side; Hanuman, for that curse, forgot his real prowess and remained inactive like a tied-up elephant. In cleverness and patience, in might and wisdom, in energy and learning, in sweetness and sobriety there is none like Hanuman. When this hero read grammar he used to visit the Sun-god from the Udayagiri to the

Astagiri. He is well-versed in the Sutras, Vrittis, Arthapada and Mahabhashya.[1] There is none so deeply versed in the Vedas like him. He has surpassed even Vrihaspati in learning. None can withstand his prowess, formidable like the doomsday fire.

It is for you that the gods have created Hanuman, Sugriva, Mainda, Dvivida, Nila, Tara, Tareya, Nala, Gavaya, Gavaksha and others. I have told you what you asked to relate.

Rama, Lakshmana and others were greatly astonished at Agastya's words. Rama said, "Since I have been favoured by your visit it is clear that my ancestors and gods are pleased with me. Now I want to perform a sacrifice, will you kindly help in that ?"

Agastya and other Rishis agreed to Rama's proposal and left for their respective places. Rama then thought about the sacrifice.

CHAPTER XI

DEPARTURE OF THE CHIEFS

In the morning, Rama was roused from sleep by the chantings of the bards, who sang his praise, and after morning ablutions, sat upon his throne and appeared like a second Indra. He then looked after all the works of administration in detail.

King Janaka who was stopping at Ayodhya returned to his own capital.

Then Kasiraja went to his own capital, and after him, three hundred princes, being honoured by Rama, went to their respective places. They were called by

1. Different parts of Grammar.

Bharata for Rama's assistance, and they regretted that they could not be of any use to Rama because the fight was over. They offered rich presents to Rama.

Rama, by his cordial friendship and rich presents, personally honoured Hanuman, Sugriva, Angada, Nila, Nala, Kesari, Gandhamadana, Kumuda, Susena, Panasa, Mainda, Dvivida, Jamvuvan, Gavaksha, Vinata, Dhumra, Valimukha, Prajangha, Saunanda, Darimukha, Dadhimukha, Indrajanu and other Vanara chiefs. They all stayed with him for several months.

One day, Rama told Sugriva to repair to his own kingdom and to rule there in peace and prosperity. He also told the same thing to Vibhishana. The Vanaras and the Rakshasas then began to praise Rama for his nobility and generosity.

But Hanuman said, "O king! let my mind ever remain devoted to you, and let not my feelings undergo any change. Let me live so long the story of Rama will last. Let the nymphs always sing to my ears the glory of your divine life. I shall chase away the sorrow of separation from you by that song as the wind drives away the clouds."

Rama then stood up and embraced Hanuman in deep affection and said, "Your desire will be fulfilled. So long my story will continue, you, with your reputation, will exist. For each and every act of help rendered by you I should pay you with my life, and for all your acts I shall ever remain grateful to you. A man wants return for his services in times of difficulty. Let no danger or difficulty befall you at any moment. Let all your help end with my body."

With these words, Rama took off a shining necklace

from his neck and put it on Hanuman's. With that necklace Hanuman looked like the Sumeru hill bright with the silvery rays of the moon.

All then in deep reluctance took their leave of Rama, and each one felt sorry, as one feels when parting with life.

After the departure of the Vanaras, Rama with his brothers passed his days in happiness and peace.

CHAPTER XII

DIVERSIONS OF RAMA

One day, Rama heard a sweet voice from above, "O king! just look up to me, I have come back from Kuvera's place, and my name is Pushpaka. Kuvera has been greatly pleased for the destruction of Ravana and his brood. He has, therefore, asked me to come back to you and to carry you. This will give him great satisfaction, so please accept me."

Rama then accepted the Pushpaka and told the Pushpaka to roam in the sky at its own will. Pushpaka then went to its own place of desire.

Bharata then said to Rama, "O worshipful lord! you are a god; during your reign even non-human objects have obtained power of speech! For a long time, people are free from disease, even old people have not died. Women give birth to good sons. All are hale and hearty. The citizens are extremely happy. The clouds rain in due time and the wind always blows favourably. All people say, let us always have such a king."

Rama was greatly pleased at these words of Bharata.

Once Rama entered the Asoka garden, full of blossoms and fruits. It was vocal with the sweet notes of various birds. The garden was encircled by a moat. The trees of the garden seemed to vie with each other in the profusion of flowers. The ground was covered with flowers like the sky with the stars.

Entering the Asoka, Rama sat upon a marble seat covered with a fine coverlet, and gave Sita pure Maireya wine to drink. At that time, the servants brought well-cooked meat and various kinds of fruits. Beautiful Kinnaris and nymphs, intoxicated with wine and adorned with jewels and ornaments, began to regale Rama with their songs and dancing. Rama thus passed a long time in enjoyment. He looked after royal business in the forenoon and passed the end of the day in the harem. Janaki too passed the first half of the day by attending on her mothers-in-law and then, after wearing fine apparel, went to Rama as Sachi went to Indra. Rama was greatly pleased with her sight.

After some time, Rama asked Sita, "My darling ! I find all the symptoms of pregnancy in you. Tell me what is your desire. What can I do for you ?"

Janaki with a gentle smile said, "My lord ! I wish to revisit the sacred hermitages of the Rishis and want to go to those holy men. I wish to spend at least one night in their hermitage. This is my heart's desire."

Rama said, "Your desire will be satisfied, you will start even tomorrow for the hermitages." Saying this, Rama left Janaki for the Audience Hall.

When Rama was seated in the central hall, many accomplished men came and gathered round Rama. They began to indulge in various jokes and lively talks.

Vijay, Madhumatta, Kasyapa, Mangala, Kula, Surajit, Kalia, Bhadra, Dantavakra, Sumaghada and others were engaged in mirth-provoking conversations.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ACCUSATION

When the courtiers were engaged in merry talks, Rama asked, "Tell me, Bhadra! what is the current topic of the people in the country? Do they speak anything about Sita? What do they say about Bharata and Satrughna? What do the people speak about mother Kaikeyi? Do they always talk about their king?"

Bhadra then respectfully submitted, "When the citizens speak anything about you, they always say good things about you. They often talk of your victory over Ravana."

Rama then asked, "Tell me, Bhadra! what the citizens say? Tell me everything good and evil. I shall then act accordingly, do what is good and avoid what is wrong. Tell me everything without any fear or reserve."

Thereupon, Bhadra with joined palms said, "Hear me then, O lord! what the citizens say everywhere. They say that building a bridge over the sea is an unheard of feat; they have not heard of any such thing about the former kings, or about the gods, or the Danavas. Rama has destroyed formidable Ravana with his powerful hosts. He has reduced the Rakshasas, Vanaras and the Bhallakas into submission. He has rescued Sita and brought her home by keeping back

jealousy. We know not how strong is Rama's desire for the company of Sita! Ravana forcibly abducted Sita, took her on his lap and kept her in the Asoka forest. Sita was under the power of the Rakshasas. We know not why Rama did not despise Sita. People always imitate the doings of the king. Henceforth we shall have to forbear all such lapses of our wives. This is what they speak about you in the city and in the villages."

Rama was extremely pained by these words and he asked his friends to tell him if that was true or not? Then all bowed to the ground and said in a body, "O king! nothing of what has been submitted by Bhadra is false."

Rama then dismissed all his friends and courtiers and after deciding in his mind the course of action asked the porter to fetch Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna without any delay.

The porter then hurried to Lakshmana's place and humbly said, "The king wants to see you, please go immediately to him."

In like manner, he informed Bharata and Satrughna about Rama's desire. The three brothers at once started to meet Rama as desired by the latter. On their arrival, the porter informed Rama about their presence. Rama then, with his head cast down in sorrow, asked the porter to bring them in. "They are dear to me as my life," said Rama, "and my life depends on them."

Then the princes clad in white apparel entered the central hall and found Rama cast down in sorrow, like the moon in the clutch of the Rahu. He looked like the setting sun, and his eyes like the petals of a lotus full of

dews. They grew anxious at that sight and bowed to his feet. Rama stood up with tearful eyes and embracing them said, "My brothers ! you are my everything in life. It is your kingdom that I do administer. Now do what I ask you to do."

The princes anxiously waited to hear Rama speak.

Then Rama with a dry countenance observed, "Just hear what the citizens say about Sita, but do not be sorry. Much evil is said about me both in the city and in the country. I have been greatly mortified by that report. You see, I am born in the family of great Ikshvaku. Sita too is born of noble Janak. Lakshmana, you know that I have slain Ravana because he abducted Sita from the Dandaka forest. At that time it occured to me that Sita was long imprisoned in Ravana's harem—how could I accept her again as my wife ? Then Sita for my satisfaction in the presence of all entered into fire as a proof of her purity. Then all the gods and the saints declared her to be absolutely stainless and pure ; then Indra offered her to me because she was chaste and pure. I did also know in my heart of hearts that Janaki is chaste and pure. Then I have brought her back to Ayodhya. But this infamous report has greatly pained my heart. He lives in hell about whom evil reports are spread. Everybody hates ill-fame and worships fame. Every noble man aspires after fame. Not to speak of Sita, I can even give up my life for fear of infamy. I have been plunged into an ocean of sorrow for this piece of ignomony. I have not suffered greater pain in the past. So, my brother take Sita tomorrow morning in the chariot driven by Sumantra and leave her in some other country.

"On the other side of the Ganges, stands the sacred hermitage of Valmiki on the bank of the Tamasa. Go and leave there Janaki in some secluded place. Don't make any request about Janaki. Just do as I say. Go now, there is no need of discussing good or evil. I shall be greatly offended if you want to dissuade me from this. Swear by my feet not to speak to me anything about it. I do entreat to consider, that whoever will speak anything about it, will be reckoned by me as my great enemy for standing in the way of my wishes. If you be one with me, keep my request, go and abandon Sita in some deserted place, and thereby keep my prestige. Formerly, Sita told me that she wanted to visit the hermitages on the banks of the Ganges ; now fulfil that desire of hers."

With these words, Rama left his brothers and hurriedly entered his room with tearful eyes and panted heavily with a sorrow-stricken heart.

CHAPTER XIV

THE EXILE

When the night was over, Lakshmana with a dry countenance sorrowfully asked Sumantra to yoke fast horses to the chariot and make a seat within the chariot for Sita.

"According to royal directions, I shall take Sita to the holy hermitages of the Rishis—so fetch, the chariot soon."

Sumantra in no time got the chariot ready and brought it before Lakshmana.

Then Lakshmana went to Sita and said, "Worshipful

lady ! the king has acceded to your request. He has asked me to take you to the hermitages on the bank of the Ganges, and at the royal command I shall soon take you to the forest inhabited by the Rishis."

Hearing this, Janaki was mightily pleased and got herself ready for setting out. Taking a lot of precious jewels and costly apparel, Sita said, "I shall distribute these amongst the wives of the Rishis."

Lakshmana approved of Sita's proposal and got upon the chariot, and thinking of Rama's direction, he asked the charioteer to drive the chariot fast.

In the meantime, Janaki said, "My boy, I see various evil portents on all sides. My right eye is throbbing and my limbs are trembling all over. My mind seems to be uneasy. I feel great anxiety for Rama. The whole world appears almost vapid to me. Is not your brother, Rama, well ? Are not my mothers-in-law well ? Has any evil befallen on the people ?"

With those words, Janaki with joined hands prayed to gods for their well-being.

Hearing of evil portents, Lakshmana with a sorrowful heart, but with a cheerful countenance, said, "O worshipful lady ! everything is all right."

Lakshmana then passed the night in a hermitage on the bank of the Gomati. On the following morning, he asked Sumantra to bring the chariot, saying, "This day I shall stand the descent of the Ganges like the Himalayas on the head."

Sumantra got the chariot ready and asked Janaki to get into it. Then Sita mounted the car with Lakshmana.

The sacred Ganges was flowing at a short distance.

Lakshmana after covering a distance of half-a-day's journey, began to cry aloud at the sight of the Ganges.

Seeing Lakshmana thus stricken with sorrow Janaki asked him most affectionately, "My boy! why do you cry arriving at the bank of the Ganges, the object of my desire? Why do you make me sad in moments of delight? You do always live near Rama; do you weep because you could not see him during last two nights? Rama is dearer to me than life, but, to speak the truth I have not been cast down with sorrow like you. Don't be so unnerved with sorrow. Help me to cross the Ganges and show me the hermits. I shall spend one night in the hermitage and after distributing the clothes and jewels, shall go back to Ayodhya. My mind too has become restless for the sight of Rama."

Then Lakshmana wiped off his tears and called the boatmen before him. The boatmen came and informed him that everything was ready.

Then Lakshmana boarded with Janaki a spacious craft brought by the Nishadas. He then asked Sumantra to wait and asked the boatmen to steer on.

At last, they reached the other bank of the Ganges. Lakshmana then with tearful eyes and joined palms said, "O worshipful lady! my heart is wrung with sorrow. Worthy Rama is wise no doubt, but since he has employed me in this affair, I shall surely be odious to the people. This day, I would prefer death. It is not at all proper for me to have any hand in this ignominous deed. Be good to me, please do not take any offence with me."

With these words, Lakshmana fell prostrate on the ground.

Then Janaki seeing Lakshmana praying for his death, said, with tears, "My boy ! I can't understand anything; just say frankly what the matter is. Why you are so sad and anxious? Is not the royal master well? Has he requested you for anything for which you repent so much. I command you to tell me everything without any reserve."

Lakshmana shedding incessant tears, replied with a downcast look, "O worshipful lady ! the king having heard the great scandal that has spread about you both in the city and in the country, has reported only to me. What he has kept secret in his heart I cannot possibly disclose that to you. You were proved to be absolutely pure even in my presence ; still the king has abandoned you in fear of scandal. Do not think that he suspects you in any way. This is the royal command, and it was your desire too, for these two things I shall leave you in the hermitage. This is the sacred hermitage of Valmiki on the bank of the Ganges. Famous Valmiki was a close friend of my father, king Dasaratha. Live here under his shelter. Pass your days in devotion and chastity, thinking of Rama. Good will happen to you at the end."[1]

1 The desertion of Sita was not an incident in the original epic of Valmiki, but its pathetic tale has so deeply influenced the popular imagination, that most of the readers find it difficult to dismiss it as a pure myth, though the whole of the Uttara Kandam, is palpably a later addition, redundant to the epic. This episode of desertion has, of course, enhanced the glory of divine Sita. Perhaps it is the only justification for the existence of the Uttara Kandam.

CHAPTER XV

SITA'S SPEECH

Sita fainted at these terrible, cruel words of Lakshmana. After some time, when she regained her consciousness, she said with tears, "Lakshmana! God has created me for suffering. I have been suffering and meeting with sorrows ever since the beginning of my life. I don't know what great sin I committed in my prior birth, or to whom I caused pangs of separation, that my lord has abandoned me, though I am chaste and devoted to him. Formerly, I could bear all the hardships of a forest-life because Rama was by my side, but how shall I live alone in this asylum? To whom shall I speak my sorrows? What shall I say to the hermits when they will question me? What ignoble act did you commit for which noble Rama has deserted you? O Lakshmana! certainly I would have drowned myself in the Ganges, if Rama's child was not within my womb. Now, do what you have been asked to do. Leave this miserable woman and obey the royal command. But let me tell you a few words, just listen to them. Convey my respects to my mothers-in-law, then after due greetings tell my royal lord that I am thoroughly devoted to him and my character is stainless. I have great respect for him and I know that he has abandoned me in fear of public odium. He is the highest goal of my life and it is my duty to purge him from all stains of ignomony. Tell also the virtuous king that he should look upon his people as he does, with affection as to his brothers. It is his noble duty, and that he should rule justly over the people. I shall not grieve even for a moment even if I lose my life. He should act in the manner by which

he may be free from all calumny. Her husband to a woman is her highest lord, friend and preceptor. A woman should even sacrifice her insignificant life for the good of the husband. Lakshmana! this is all I have to say. Tell all these to the royal master. Just mark the symptoms that I am carrying at this moment."

Lakshmana then sorrowfully bowed down at Sita's feet. Lakshmana could not utter anything because he lost his power of speech, and cried aloud. Lakshmana cricumambulated her and after some thought said, "O worshipful lady, what do you say? I have never gazed upon you except on your feet. How can I see you now in the absence of Rama?"

With these words, Lakshmana again bowed down to Janaki and got upon his boat. He asked the boatman to steer on and soon crossed the Ganges. On reaching the bank, he got upon the chariot dazed and benumbed with sorrow.

Here Sita was rolling in the dust. Lakshmana repeatedly looked at her as he was dragging himself forward. Janaki too repeatedly looked at Lakshmana. As soon as he was out of sight, Sita was overwhelned with sorrow and cried aloud in that deep forest, resonant with the peacocks' cries.

CHAPTER XVI

VALMIKI OFFERS PROTECTION

After some time, the hermit boys seeing Sita crying in the forest, ran to the sage Valmiki, and after bowing down at his feet, they said, "O lord! an exceedingly beautiful woman is crying in the forest. We have

never seen her before. She is beautiful like the goddess Lakshmi. She must be the wife of some notable person. Come and see her. She seems to be a goddess descended from the sky. We saw her weeping bitterly by the side of the river. She does not look like an ordinary woman ; just come and receive her cordially. She is near the hermitage ; come and protect her."

Virtuous Valmiki could ascertain everything by his yoga, and after deciding what to do, he directed his steps towards Janaki.

On arriving at the bank of the river, Valmiki found Rama's spouse crying bitterly. Valmiki then spoke to her in sweet and gentle words :

"My daughter ! you are a daughter-in-law of king Dasaratha, dear consort of Rama, and daughter of Janaka. I could ascertain beforehand that you would be coming to the forest. I know the cause of your arrival, and I also know that you are pure and chaste. Be now comforted. You live near me. Hermit-women live at a short distance ; they will receive you like their daughter. Banish your fears, accept my hospitality, and live in my hermitage. Don't be sorry, think of it as your home."

At these words, Janaki bowed at Valmiki's feet. Valmiki then proceeded towards his hermitage and Janaki followed him. Hermit-women seeing Valmiki with Janaki welcomed him with respect and asked what they could do for him. Valmiki said, "This lady is the consort of noble Rama, daughter-in-law of king Dasaratha and daughter of Janaka. She is of pure character, but she has been deserted by Rama. Now she is under my protection, and so for her own worth and for my

request, she is worthy of your respect. Look after her with affection and care."

With those words, Valmiki left Janaki in charge of the hermit-women. Here Lakshmana felt greatly pained when Sita entered the hermitage of Valmiki. Lakshmana then addressing Sumantra said, "Look, Sumantra! what pain is in store for Rama for abandoning Janaki. What can be more painful to him than deserting a pure, devoted wife? Perhaps it is due to fate. Who in his wrath can destroy the Rakshasas, Gandharvas, is himself ruled by Fate! Formerly, Rama passed nine years in the Dandaka forest and five years in other forests at the wish of father, but this desertion of Janaki in compliance with the wishes of the citizens appears to be more painful. I know not what good will be achieved by yielding to this unjust wish of the people."

Hearing Lakshmana's words, Sumantra said, "O prince, do not be sorry for Janaki. The Brahmanas long ago told your father that Janaki would thus be banished and that Rama would be miserable throughout his life. He would suffer pangs of separation from his dear ones and would forsake you, Bharata and Satrughna. One day, when king Dasaratha wanted to know about your future, Maharshi Durvasa said all these to king Dasaratha. At that, the king asked me not to disclose these things to anybody else. I ought to obey the king and you would not have heard it, if you were not too eager. Fate is supreme. Though the king forbade me not to disclose, I have violated his orders. Remove your sorrows. It is due to fate that you are suffering now, but fate is incomprehensible. Don't tell all these to Bharata and Satrughna."

Lakshmana after hearing these significant words said, "Tell me, Sumantra! what the real truth is."

CHAPTER XVII

EPISODE OF BHRIGU'S CURSE

Sumantra said, "O prince! formerly, Atri's son Maharshi Durvasa, lived in the hermitage of Vasishtha on account of Chaturmasya penance. At that time, king Dasaratha went to see Vasishtha. Sage Durvasa was seated by the side of Vasishtha. Dasaratha respectfully greeted both the Rishis. They welcomed him with things of hospitality. Dasaratha took his seat. It was then midday, and they indulged in various kinds of pleasant conversations, in course of which king Dasaratha asked Durvasa about his own longevity, that of his sons and about the longevity of the sons that might be born of Rama."

Durvasa thereupon said, "O king! just listen what took place in the war between the Suras and the Asuras. The Daityas being worsted by the Devas sought protection of Bhrigu's wife, which the latter had promised to the Daityas. At that, Vishnu was greatly incensed and cut down the head of Bhrigu's wife by his disc. Then Maharshi Bhrigu cursed Vishnu in rage to be born as a man and to suffer the pangs of separation from his wife for a definite period. Maharshi Bhrigu became penitent for his curse and thinking that his penance might be vain began to worship Vishnu. Then Vishnu was propitiated and agreed to suffer from Bhrigu's curse. Vishnu for that curse has been born as your son and he is known as Rama. Rama will suffer from the curse of Bhrigu. He will rule for a long time in Ayodhya, people will be happy for serving him and he will go to the Brahmaloka after ten thousand and ten hundred

years. He will perform many Aswamedha sacrifices at great cost and two sons will be born unto him of Janaki. This is what sage Durvasa told king Dasaratha about Rama. I have heard this, and Vasishtha kept it so long as a secret. Now, don't be sorry for Sita and Rama."

Lakshmana was greatly relieved by Sumantra's words and praised him much. They then passed the night on the bank of the Keshi river. On the following morning, Lakshmana resumed his journey and arrived at Ayodhya.

Lakshmana with a cast down look entered the palace-gate. On entering, he found Rama seated and shedding incessant tears. He bowed at Rama's feet and said, "I have left pure Janaki at the hermitage of Valmiki. O worshipful lord ! be not overwhelmed with sorrow, it is due to evil time. A wise man like you never laments for loss. You see all savings end in loss, all rises in fall, all compositions in decompositions, and life in death. Hence a man should not be too much attached to his wife, children, or friends and relations, or to wealth, for their loss is inevitable. It is quite easy for you to control your mind and banish sorrow from your heart. A man like you is never moved by all these things. If you lament Janaki's loss in this manner, then the scandal, for fear of which you have banished Janaki will again be uppermost in the city. Be patient and banish your weakness."

Then Rama with great satisfaction said, "What you say is true; henceforth I shall devote myself to the work of administration. All my sorrows have vanished. I have understood everything by your pleasant words."

CHAPTER XVIII

RAMA AS A STORY-TELLER

Rama then said to Lakshmana, "You are intelligent and there is none more friendly to me than you. Do what I now ask you to do. For the last four days, I have not done any royal duty, so call now the ministers, the priests and all the people who have business with me. The king who does not daily look after the administration, is doomed to hell. It is said that there was a king named Nriga, once he gave millions of cows with their calves to the Brahmanas. Amongst those there was a cow that belonged to a Sagnika Brahmana. That Brahmana after a long search found out his cow in the possession of a Brahmana at Kanakhal. Then a dispute broke out over the cow between the two Brahmanas. Both then came to Nriga for a decision, but king Nriga could not be found. When after waiting for many days they got the sight of the king, the Brahmanas in anger cursed him to be transformed into a lizard and to live unseen in a hole. When Vishnu would be born as Vasudeva in the line of Yadu, he would redeem the king from the curse. Now that king Nriga is suffering from that terrible curse. In truth, quarrels occur on account of the injustice of the king. Let all people come to me."

Lakshmana then asked about the fate of Nriga. Rama said that Nriga got his son Vasu installed on the throne, dug three holes to live comfortably in summer, winter and the rains. Nriga then entered the hole.

Rama said that he had narrated the story of Nriga and if Lakshmana desired he might entertain the latter with other stories like that.

Lakshmana said, "O worshipful lord! the more I hear such wonderful stories, the more curious I grow."

Thereupon, Rama began the story of Nimi. Nimi was the twelfth son of Ikshvaku. Nimi performed a great sacrifice and asked Vasishtha to officiate as a priest. But as Vasishtha was engaged in performing a sacrifice of Indra, he asked Nimi to wait. But without waiting, Nimi asked Gautama to officiate as a priest. Vasishtha on seeing Gautama acting as a priest was greatly incensed and asked for an interview with the king. Vasishtha cursed Nimi with death, and Nimi too uttered the same curse against Vasishtha.

Lakshmana asked how Nimi and Vasishtha after death could live in their bodies again?

Vasishtha then approached Brahma for getting back a corporeal body. Brahma then asked Vasishtha to enter the energy left by Mitra and Varuna.

Then Vasishtha speedily repaired to the ocean. At that time, Varuna and Mitra were living together. At that time, the beautiful nymph Urvasi came to them. Varuna at her sight was smitten with love and asked for her company. Urvasi said that Mitra had first asked for that. Then Varuna was smitten with love and said, "O beauty! I shall then cast my seminal fluid, discharged at your sight, into that pitcher made by the gods. If you do not allow me to join, I shall relieve myself in this way."

Urvasi was greatly pleased at Varuna's words and said that though her body belonged to Mitra, but her heart belonged to him. After that Varuna emitted his fire-like energy into the pitcher. Then Urvasi appeared before Mitra. Mitra was greatly angry at this

conduct of Urvasi and he cursed her by which she was to live for some time on earth. She would then be a spouse to Pururava. Pururava was the son of Budha, the king of Kasi. Pururava's son was Ayu and Ayu's son was Nahusha who ruled in heaven for a long time when Indra had become exhausted in his war against Vritra.

Two Rishis were born of the germinal seed cast by Varuna and Mitra into the pitcher. First Agastya rose from that pitcher, and as he issued from the jar he said to Mitra, "I am your only begotten son." Saying this he went away. Before Varuna cast his seminal fluid into the jar, that contained the seminal fluid of Mitra. After some time from that admixture of Varuna's and Mitra's energy, the spirited priest of the Ikshvaku line, Maharshi Vasishtha was born. I have related to you the story of Vasishtha, now I shall speak about Nimi.

Seeing Nimi dead, the Rishis did not refrain from the sacrifice. They decorated Nimi's body with garlands, covered it with cloth and placed it in an oil-can. After the sacrifice was over Maharshi Bhrigu restored him to life. At that even the gods were pleased and they said, "O king! ask for any blessing, and tell us where to keep your bodily soul (Jivatma)." Then Nimi's soul replied, "O gods! I shall live in the eyes of all creatures."

The gods agreed and said, "You will visit every eye in the form of air. And from this time there will be winks in eyes."

Then the gods departed. After that the Rishis for the birth of Nimi's son began to rub Nimi's body like a piece of fire-drilling wood, and from that Mithi was

born from Janan. Janaka is his another name and as he was born of a dead body he is known as Vaideha.

Lakshmana then questioned Rama why Nimi while engaged in a sacrifice, did not forgive Vasishtha. Rama then said that everybody had not the same power of forbearance and he illustrated his remarks by narrating the story of king Yayati who had two wives Sarmishtha and Devayani. Puru was born of Sarmishtha and Yadu of Devayani. Yayati was more devoted to Sarmishtha. At that Devayani summoned her father Maharshi Bhargava who cursed Yayati with perpetual old age.

Yayati then being inflicted with old age, asked his son Yadu to take over his infirmities of old age. Thereupon, Yadu said that Puru was his dear son, let him take over the infirmities of old age. Yayati then asked Puru to take over his old age. Thereupon, Puru said, "I consider myself blessed today, I shall obey your commands."

After a long time Yayati asked Puru to return his old age to him. Yayati then gladly took back his old age, and cursed Yadu that since he was disobedient grim Rakshasas would be born of him in the Kraunchavana. Then Puru was installed on the throne in the city of Pratishthana.[1]

1 Again three interpolated episodes occur. In the first two episodes a dog came to Rama, preached him some homilies about religion and royal duties. In the third episode, Uluka came to Rama and told him something about royal duties and asked him to decide a dispute concerning a house between Uluka and a Vulture. Rama decided in favour of Uluka.

CHAPTER XIX

LAVANASURA

One day, as Rama set upon his throne, Sumantra came and informed that some hermits headed by Chyavana Rishi had come to see him. Rama asked to bring them without delay. The hermits presented to Rama fruits and roots and pitchers full of holy waters collected from the places of pilgrimage. Rama after showing them due respect, asked why they had come to him, and said he was ever ready to carry out their wishes. The hermits expressed their great satisfaction at these words of Rama. They then asked Rama to rescue them from great fear.

Thereupon, Rama asked them to banish their fear and to tell him what he could do for them. The sage Chyavana then said, "In the golden age there was a highly pious Daitya named Madhu—son of Lola. God Rudra was greatly pleased with his devotion and presented to him a formidable lance. Madhu then prayed that his descendants too might possess that victorious lance. At that Rudra said that, that prayer could not be granted, but it, with all its efficacy, would remain with his son. That Madhu's son is Lavanasura and his mother is Kumbhanasi. At the time of death Madhu gave that divine lance to Lavanasura. That cruel Lavanasura has grown quite formidable and is tyrannising over the whole world, specially over the hermits. Now, you have destroyed Ravana with his brood, please save us from the hands of Lavanasura."

Rama assured the hermits to remove their anxiety and enquired as to the residence of Lavanasura. The

Rishis replied that Lavanasara resided in Madhuvana.

Rama said, "Remove your fears. I shall surely kill that Rakshasa. My brothers to whom shall I allot the task of slaying that demon, to myself, to Bharata or to Satrughna ?"

Thereupon, Bharata expressed his readiness for the task. At that Satrughna said that during Rama's exile Bharata had suffered much hardship, so he must go for the destruction of Lavanasura. Then Rama said, "Let it be so. I shall crown you as the king of Madhuvana."

At that Satrughna felt deeply ashamed and said, "My Lord! it is improper to crown the younger brother when the elder one is living, but your words cannot be vain. I must carry out your wishes. I have done wrong in protesting against Bharata's proposal for destroying Lavanasura, but my evil star prompted me to protest. It is not proper for the younger brother to oppose the elder brother's words."

Rama was greatly pleased with Satrughna's words and asked Bharata and Lakshmana to make arrangements for the coronation ceremony. Then due preparations were made for Satrughna's coronation to the kingdom of Madhuvana. When Satrughna was invested with the crown, he shone like the glittering Sun. The Rishis were greatly assured by that sight.

Rama then told Satrughna that Lavanasura at the time of collecting his food, kept the lance in his house and he took that with him only when some one challenged him to a battle. Satrughna should prevent with arms Lavanasura's entrance into the house and then challenge him to a battle.

Rama then told Satrughna, "Take four thousand

horses, two thousand chariots and one thousand infantry men with you. Let merchants follow you with their merchandise. Let actors and dancers also accompany you. Take a million gold coins to pay the army. Keep the troops always contented with money and kind words, and see they do not become defiant in any way. What can be achieved by a well-contented army cannot be done by money, wife or friends. Proceed in such a manner that Lavana cannot understand your motive. There is no other way of destroying him than to intercept his way when he is unarmed, otherwise when he meets one for fight, the latter's death is sure."

Satrughna then despatched his army against Lavana after waiting for a month in Ayodhya, he set out for Lavana. Satrughna passed two nights on his way, and on the third day he reached the sacred hermitage of Valmiki.

CHAPTER XX

THE BIRTH OF KUSA AND LAVA

Satrughna after greeting the sage Valmiki said that he had come there for Rama's work, he would pass there a night and on the following day would start for the west. The sage Valmiki said that his hermitage in fact belonged to the Raghus; so he should feel himself at home. In former times, there was a king named Saudasa, Viryasaba was his son. One day, in the course of his hunting, he found the grim Rakshasas in the form of two tigers destroying the deer. He killed one of them; the other then threatened him with injury in future. Some time after, Saudasa performed an Aswa-

medha sacrifice. After the sacrifice was over, the Rakshasa assumed the form of Vasishtha and asked the king to entertain him with meat diet. The king, thereupon, asked two cooks to prepare meat for him. In the meantime, the Rakshasa, in the guise of a cook, cooked human flesh and then served that meat to Saudasa, queen Madayanti and to Vasishtha. Vasishtha after testing it found it to be human flesh and cursed Saudasa to feed upon human flesh for serving him with it. King Saudasa too was about to curse, when queen Madayanti interfered and forbade Saudasa to curse a sage like Vasishtha. Saudasa's face grew dark for anger and from that time he came to be known as Kalmashapada. Saudasa and his queen bowed to Vasishtha who said that the king would be absolved from the curse after twelve years. Saudasa again ruled over his kingdom. The sacred sacrificial ground of Saudasa was close to Valmiki's hermitage.

The night Satrughna was in Valmiki's hermitage, Janaki was delivered of two sons. It was then midnight. The hermit boys informed Valmiki of the birth of Janaki's son. Valmiki at that news came and found the two babies beautiful like the moon. Valmiki then performed some rites with Kusa grass that were calculated to remove all ghosts and Rakshasas for the safety of those babies. Valmiki then asked some elderly people to rub the body of the first-born of the twin with ends of the Kusa grass, and to rub the younger one with the lower end of the Kusa grass. For this, the elder boy became known as Kusa and the younger one as Lava, which means the lower end. "These twin boys," declared Valmiki, "will be known in the

names bestowed by me as Kusa and Lava." Satrughna even in the midnight could overhear everything and he was glad to hear that sons were born to Rama. In the morning, Satrughna set out for Lavana, and after seven days' journey, he arrived at the sacred hermitage of Chyavana and of other hermits on the bank of the Yamuna.

CHAPTER XXI

DESTRUCTION OF LAVANA

At night, Satrughna asked hermit Chyavana about the prowess of Lavana. Chyavana said that formerly there was a powerful king in the Ikshvaku line named Mandhata. He made preparations for the conquest of the three worlds and that frightened the gods and Indra.

Indra then approached Mandhata and said that he should first reduce the whole earth into submission and then should think of conquering heaven. Then Mandhata asked Indra to tell him who on earth had not yet been brought under his subjection. Indra then mentioned Lavana, Madhu's son, residing in Madhuvana. Mandhata then in great wrath set out against Lavana. Mandhata sent his envoy to Lavana, but Lavana in anger ate up his emissary. Mandhata then incensed with anger challenged Lavana to a fight. Lavana issued forth with his dreadful lance and hurled it against Mandhata. It at once destroyed Mandhata and returned to Lavana's hand. The Rishi then advised Satrughna to kill Lavana when the latter would be out in search of his food.

Early in the morning, Lavana set out in search of

his food ; in the meantime Satrughna crossed the Yamuna and besieged the entrance of Madhuvana.

At midday, Lavana returned with heaps of carcasses of different animals and found Satrughna standing at the gate. Lavana laughed at his audacity and said that all his arms would be of no avail against him ; and Lavana thanked Satrughna for arriving at his hour of meal.

Satrughna in anger challenged him to a duel and declared that he was Satrughna, the younger brother of heroic Rama and noble Bharata. Thereupon, Lavana burst out in a loud laugh saying Ravana was the brother of his maternal aunt Surpanakha, but he had excused Rama from contempt, because Rama and his host were not worth his challenge. After such a short exchange of heated words between Lavana and Satrughna, a severe struggle ensued between the two, and Lavana struck Satrughna with a huge tree on his head. Satrughna fainted and Lavana then took up the dead animals on his shoulders which he had kept on the ground at the time of the scuffle, and thinking Satrughna to be dead advanced towards the gate. But in no time Satrughna stood upon his legs and opposed Lavana with arms against his ingress into the house, and took up an irresistible shaft for the destruction of Lavana. Even the gods were frightened by the sight of that formidable arrow and approached Brahma, the Grandfather of creation. Brahma then said that with that shaft Vishnu formerly destroyed Madhu and Kaitabha. Rama had given that to Satrughna knowing full well its consequence ; hence they should remove their fears and should go and witness with their own eyes the destruc-

tion of Lavana. The gods then departed. They saw the dreadful arrow burning in Satrughna's hand. Satrughna stretched his bow and sent it flying towards Lavana. It at once pierced Lavana's heart and Lavana fell dead on the ground.

Satrughna then shone like the sun free from the clouds. The gods and saints praised Satrughna for his great victory.

Satrughna then settled in Madhuvana. He built there a magnificent city and lived with his army and followers. Madhuvana soon grew into a prosperous city. After twelve years Satrughna came back to Ayodhya leaving his men in Madhuvana.

CHAPTER XXII

SATRUGHNA'S RETURN

After passing by eight inns, Satrughna arrived at the hermitage of Valmiki. Valmiki received him cordially, and offered him hospitality. Valmiki complimented Satrughna for destroying Lavana, who had killed many kings with their armies. Then the sage Valmiki sniffed Satrughna's head as a mark of affection.

The Rishi had composed Rama-charita. After dinner Satrughna listened to that ministrel. That song was sung in accompaniment of harp, and distinctly pronounced sounds issued from the lungs, gullet and palate. The song was composed in refined Sanskrit in due metres and had all the characteristics of a song. Its every expression was true, and it faithfully described every incident that had occured before. There was no perversion of truth at any place. Tears bedimmed

Satrughna's eyes. He began to heave sighs, and the events narrated in the song were past, but they seemed to occur again before his eyes. Even his troops that accompanied him admired the song. They talked amongst themselves, "How wonderful it is! Is it a dream? What we have witnessed in the past is now being reproduced in the hermitage." They then requested Satrughna to ask Valmiki who was the composer of that song?

Satrughna said, "My soldiers! it is not proper to question Valmiki about it. Many such wounderful things happen in Valmiki's hermitage; we should not be over-curious about anything."

With these words Satrughna retired to his allotted hut for rest. Satrughna could not sleep that night; he continued to think about the sweet lyrics he had heard. In the morning, Satrughna took Valmiki's leave and started for Ayodhya.

On entering the palace, Satrughna found Rama seated like a second Indra surrounded by his counsellors. After bowing down to Rama, Satrughna said that he had carried out Rama's command. Wicked Lavana had been slain and Madhupuri had turned into a populous city. But he was sorry for living far from Rama for these twelve years and so he asked Rama's permission to live in Ayodhya and not to leave him in future. Thereupon, Rama embraced Satrughna and asked him not to be sorry for this. Rama said, "It is not proper for a Kshatriya to lament like this. A Kshatriya never feels sorry to live in a foreign land. It is the duty of a Kshatriya to rule his subjects properly. You will have to go back to your kingdom, but you may come

to Ayodhya occasionally to see me. You are dearer to me than life, live with me for seven nights and then return with your men to Madhupuri."

Satrughna with a sorrowful heart acceded to Rama's proposal. He lived in Ayodhya for seven nights, and then started for Madhupur, after greeting Rama, Lakshmana and Bharata. Bharata and Lakshmana followed Satrughna on foot to some distance.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DEATH OF A BRAHMANA LAD

One day, an old Brahmana arrived at the palace-gate with a dead child in his arms. The Brahmana was bitterly wailing for the death of his son. The Brahmana was saying, "Ah, what wicked deeds did I commit in my former birth ? For what sin have I lost you, my son ? Oh, my darling ! you were a tender boy, not yet arrived at puberty. You were only fifteen. Where have you flitted away, by leaving me behind ? Both myself and your poor mother will die for you in a short time. I do not remember to have ever spoken any falsehood, or to have hurt anybody, or to do any injury to anyone. For what misdeed, has my son, without performing the funeral rites of his father, fallen a victim to death ? I have never seen, nor ever heard that one dies untimely during Rama's rule. When the boy died surely there is some great sin in Rama's rule. In another's rule, such things would never happen. O Rama ! the boy is dead, restore him to life, or I shall with my wife die before you. Live long then happily with your brothers being guilty of killing a Brahmana.

So long we lived happily, but we are now subject to death. When the boy died, surely the kingdom of the great Ikshvaku is without a ruler. People suffer on account of an inefficient king, and when the king is strays from virtues, people die untimely ; or it might be, that people of the city and the country have been greatly addicted to vice, and their crimes are not duly punished. This is certainly a fault of the king, and my son has died for that fault of the king."

The Brahmana thus repeatedly accused Rama and waited at the gate of the palace with his dead boy on his lap.

Rama heard this bitter lament of the Brahmana. With sorrowful heart he summoned his brothers, counsellors, Vasishtha, Vamadeva and the citizens.

At his call, with Vasishtha came Markandeya, Madgaulya, Vamadeva, Kasyapa, Katyayana, Javali, Gautama and Narada. They blessed Rama and took their seats. Rama greeted them respectfully, received the courtiers courteously. When everyone took his seat, Rama sorrowfully began, "A Brahmana is waiting at the royal gate with a dead child in his arms. Tell me why this boy has died so untimely ?" Thereupon, Narada said, "Just listen to the cause of the boy's death and then decide your duty. In the Golden Age, only the Brahmanas were given to meditation and penance. Besides them, other castes were not entitled to that. At that time, there was no untimely death. After Satya, or the Golden Age came the Silver Age ; at that time, people's faith in Brahma was shaken a bit and for that vanity of self the Kshatriyas were born. In the Satyayuga, only the Brahmanas observed penance, but in the Tretayuga

it became common with the Kshatriyas. In the Satya-yuga, the Brahmanas were superior to the Kshatriyas in meditation, but in the Treta both were equal in Tapasya. Manu and other Rishis finding no difference between the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas made shastras for the four castes. In that age there was hardly any obstacle to the cultivation of virtue. At that time, only a quarter of the full measure of sin existed on earth. In the Golden Age, Krishi or agriculture was an abomination, in the Silver Age, impiety appeared in the form of the agriculture. In the Golden Age, people lived on fruits and roots that were obtained without any labour. For the existence of sin in the form of cultivation, the life span of the people became shortened ; then that of sacrifices and of other religious rites reaped virtue. In the Satya and the Treta Yugas, the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas were devoted to penance, and the other castes served them. Of the four castes, the Vaisyas and the Sudras served the other two castes, but when the Vaisyas took to agriculture, the duty of serving the other three castes fell upon the Sudras. At that time, two parts of sin possessed the world. It was then the Dwapara Age. And the Vaisyas gradually took to Tapasya. But later on, the low Sudras will be greatly devoted to Tapasya, but that will be in the Kali Yuga. It is highly sinful for a Sudra to be devoted to penance and meditation in the Dwapara Age ; that Sudra is practising penance under your rule. Hence the Brahmin boy died so untimely. The king during whose rule misdeeds are committed, both the miscreants and the king are doomed to perdition. The king who rules justly gets one-sixth of the virtuous

merits of the people. Hence, find out all the misdeeds in your kingdom and try to punish them. If you act in this way, then your virtuous merits will be enhanced, people's life span will be increased and the Brahmana boy will regain his life."

CHAPTER XXIV

SAMVUKA'S PUNISHMENT

Rama was greatly delighted with Narada's words, and told Lakshmana, "My boy! go and give hopeful assurance to the Brahmana and preserve the body of the Brahmana lad in an oil-vat. See that the boy does not become decomposed in any way."

Rama then thought of the Pushpaka, and the Pushpaka at once appeared before him. Rama then assigning the duty of the protection of the city to Bharata, Lakshmana and Satrughna set out towards the west. But he found no trace of impiety in that quarter. Then he started for the north bounded by the Himalayas and thence towards the east. Then he arrived at the south, where he found on the north of the Saivala mountain an ascetic practising hard penance. He was dangling from a tree with head downwards, on the bank of a spacious tank.

Rama accosting him said, "You are indeed blessed. Tell me in which caste you have been born. I am Rama, son of Dasaratha. Out of curiosity, I have asked you this question. Tell me the truth whether you are a Brahmana, Kshatriya, or a Sudra?"

The ascetic replied, "O king! I am born of Sudra caste. I want to attain divinity by such penance. When

I want to attain divinity I won't tell lies. I am a Sudra by caste, and my name is Samvuka."

As soon as the ascetic uttered those words, Rama drew forth his sword and severed Samvuka's head.

As soon Sudra Samvuka was slain the gods uttered praise of Rama. Flowers were rained from above, and the gods told Rama to ask for a boon.

Rama, thereupon, said that they were pleased with him—then they would restore the Brahmana boy to life. Rama was pledged to the Brahmana for the revival of his son.

The gods then assured Rama that the Brahmana had already revived the moment the Sudra ascetic was killed. The gods then informed Rama that they would then go to the sage Agastya. Agastya had been living in water for the last twelve years, and the time for the completion of his penance had arrived. They then requested Rama to accompany them to Agastya's place. Rama agreed to their proposal and followed the gods in his Pushpaka chariot.

CHAPTER XXV

SAGE AGASTYA'S EPISODE

Rama got down from the Pushpaka and bowed at Agastya's feet. The sage Agastya was effulgent with divine energy. Agastya by receiving him with warm hospitality said that he was his honoured guest for his great virtues and he had already heard from the gods about Samvuka's fate and restoration of his Brahmana lad to life. He then asked Rama to accept some ornaments made by the heavenly architect Viswakarma.

Rama refused them saying that only the Brahmanas could accept a gift and a Kshatriya should not.

Agastya then related that in the Satyayuga there was no king. The people one day approached Brahma and asked for a ruler. Thereupon, Brahma called upon the principal gods—the rulers of different regions to give a portion of their energy. At that time Brahma sneezed. A king was born of that sneezing. Sneezing was called Kshupa, hence the king was named Kshupa. Brahma then imparted to Kshupa the spirit of Indra for the occupation of the earth. Varuna's spirit for the maintenance of the body, Kuvera's spirit for the possession of wealth and that of Yama for the chastisement of the people. Rama should, therefore, accept the ornaments in the spirit of Indra. Rama, thereupon, accepted the gift of Agastya and asked whence the sage had got them. Agastya said that in the Tretayuga there was an extensive forest and Agastya practised penance in that. Once out of curiosity Agastya entered that forest and inside the dense forest saw a beautiful hermitage. But that hermitage was empty. Agastya passed the night there, but in the morning found a dead body lying on the ground. He was struck by the beauty of the dead body. When Agastya was thinking about that strange corpse, suddenly a chariot descended from the sky. An effulgent man was seated in that and fairies and nymphs were singing and dancing around him. That man got down from his chariot and fed upon the dead body. Agastya then enquired why that man took that abominable flesh of a dead body. The man then replied that his father was famous Sudeva. He had two wives and two sons were born to

them. He was Sweta and his elder brother was Suratha. After Sudeva's death, the citizens made him their king. After thinking that his end was nigh, Sweta repaired to the forest by installing Suratha on the throne. He then passed three thousand years in penance. "I then reached Brahmaloka," said Sweta, "but was greatly oppressed by hunger and thirst." He then asked Brahma why he was suffering thus, when people in Brahmaloka are free from them. Brahma then said that human flesh would be his meat, that he had so long only practised penance, but made no charities and that hence; he suffered from hunger and thirst even in Brahmaloka. That henceforth he would feed upon dead bodies and when Agastya would come he would be absolved from this curse. He then prayed to Agastya to save him and to accept those ornaments. That was how Agastya came to possess those ornaments.

Rama then enquired why the place where Sweta practised penance was devoid of all beasts and birds.

Thereupon Agastya said that in the Golden Age there was a great king named Manu, the founder of the caste system and of the respective duties of the castes. His son was Ikshvaku who was the founder of royal dynasties.

After Manu, Ikshvaku became king and he had a hundred sons. Of his sons the youngest was dull and he never obeyed his elder brothers. Ikshvaku named that son as Danda. That Danda founded a kingdom between the Vindhyas and the Saivala. He founded a beautiful city named Madhumantra and appointed the sage Sukra as his priest.

After a long rule, one day, Danda, went to the

hermitage of Sukra and saw Sukra's beautiful daughter loitering alone. Danda was at once smitten with love and he forcibly embraced her. Danda then outraged her and returned to his city.

Sukra's daughter Araja then in tears went towards her father's hermitage. Sukra soon got information from the mouth of a pupil. Sukra's wrath was kindled and uttered the awful curse that Indra would devastate Danda's kingdom and all living beings in that kingdom would die. For seven nights the clouds would rain dust over the place and everything would be buried under it. He then asked the people of the hermitage to leave the forest. Sukra then asked Araja to live in Samadhi. Sukra's words were realised in time. From that time, Danda's kingdom had come to be known as the Dandaka forest.

Rama passed the night in Agastya's hermitage and on the following morning he left for Ayodhya with Agastya's permission. Rama then reached Ayodhya in the midday and sent information to Bharata and Lakshmana.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE ASWAMEDHA SACRIFICE

Rama on return to Ayodhya, expressed his wish for the performance of the Rajasuya sacrifice.

At that proposal, Bharata said all the kings looked upon Rama as their father. So he must not do anything by which the kings might suffer. Those kings were obedient to Rama, and so he must not ruin them. Rama gladly agreed to Bharata's proposal and said that for Bharata's words he had refrained from that sacrifice.

Lakshmana then advised Rama to perform the Aswamedha sacrifice, the destroyer of all sins.

Lakshmana then related how once there was a great friendship between the gods and the Asuras, and how Vritra became formidable by his penance. The gods then approached Vishnu for the suppression of Vritra. Vishnu told them that Indra would be able to destroy Vritra by his thunder. After the destruction of Vritra, Indra grew anxious, for he had committed a great sin by killing Vritra. According to Vishnu's advice, Indra performed the Aswamedha sacrifice and was absolved from sin. After the sacrifice, the sin of killing a Brahmana appeared in the person of a woman before the gods who asked her to divide herself into four parts. She did so, and said that one part would live in the rivers for four months during the rains; another would live for ever in barren lands; the third part would live for three days in young women; and the fourth part would, exist in them who would, for nothing, scandalise, or kill Brahmanas. The gods agreed to her words and Indra became absolved from sin. The Aswamedha was of such efficacy!

Rama said that he had heard the story of Vritra and he began to narrate the story of Ila. There was a virtuous king named Ila, who was the lord of the world. One day, he went on hunting. In the course of his hunting, he entered the forest where Kartika was born. There, the god Sankara was sporting in amorous dalliance with Parvati. There Sankara turned all male creatures into females. As soon as Ila entered that spot he and his men were at once turned into women. Ila learnt from Sankara's words that that transformation

could not be changed. Ila then prayed to Parvati. Parvati then granted Ila's prayer in halves, saying that Ila would remain for one month as a man and the next month as a woman, and that when as a man, he would not remember the state of a woman, and when a woman, he would not remember that of a man.

In the course of Ila's change as woman, Ila saw Maharshi Budha, son of Soma. Ila was greatly captivated by his beauty and Budha too was highly infatuated by Ila's beauty. But Budha soon learnt the true state of things by yoga and changed the female companions of Ila into Kimpurusha women, and they would get Kimpurusha men as their husbands. Budha began to enjoy Ila. After a month Ila rose from sleep as a man and found Budha engaged in penance and enquired the sage about his followers. Budha finding Ila ignorant of everything, told him that his followers had been destroyed by hail storm. Ila became greatly sorry at these words, and asked Budha's permission to return to his kingdom. But Budha asked Ila to remain there. In course of time, Ila in union with Budha, gave birth to a son ; the name of that son was Pururava.

When Ila regained his manhood, Budha called some sages to decide what was good for Ila—the son of Prajapati Kardama. The sages decided that nothing could be done without propitiating Sankara. The god Rudra was very fond of the Aswamedha sacrifice and they decided to perform that sacrifice. Rudra was greatly pleased at the performance of the Aswamedha sacrifice in his honour and granted manhood to Ila.

Rama then asked Lakshmana to call Vasishtha,

Vamadeva, Javali and Kasyapa, well-experienced in the performance of the Aswamedha sacrifice.

When those sages came, Rama expressed his desire for the performance of an Aswamedha sacrifice. The sages bowed to Rudra and spoke highly about the merits of the Aswamedha.

Finding the sages approving his proposal, Rama asked Lakshmana to send invitations to Sugriva, Vibhishana and to all the kings who were friendly to him.

Rama also asked Lakshmana to make all necessary arrangements for the sacrifice. "Let all join the sacrifice," said Rama.

Bharata then set out with gold and silver coins for collecting all necessary articles for the sacrifice. Rama asked Bharata to fetch a golden statue of Sita for being installed in the sacrifice.

Thereupon, Bharata and Satrughna made all necessary arrangements for the sacrifice, and a general proclamation for a great public festivity was given.

CHAPTER XXVII

VALMIKI AND THE SACRIFICE

Then, at Rama's command, a black buck and a beautiful horse were let loose. Lakshmana with the Ritwiks were engaged in protecting the same. After setting the horse free, Rama with his army repaired to Naimisha Kshetra to witness the wonderful sacrifice.

Kings and princes began to pour in from various quarters. Bharata and Satrughna were entrusted with the duties of receiving them. Sugriva and other Vanaras looked after their entertainments. Vibhishana

and the Rakshasas looked after the hermits and the Rishis. Costly and beautiful camps were pitched for the kings and their followers. With great pomp and splendour Rama's Aswamedha sacrifice began. In the sacrificial ground, the royal order was ever repeated to give liberally till the needy were satisfied ; and before one did ask for anything, the Vanaras and the Rakshasas sated him with sweets. In truth, in Rama's sacrifice none could be found who appeared to be sad, dejected or dirty. Everybody looked quite hale and hearty. The monks and the Rishis declared that they had never seen such a great sacrifice before, and nowhere charities on such an extensive scale had been seen. He who wanted gold got it ; he who wanted gems got them. In the sacrificial ground, money and clothes were kept in mountain-like huge piles. Thus for about a year, the great sacrifice continued. Here again, the horse followed by Lakshmana, began to roam about at his sweet will.

In that sacrifice, the sage Valmiki came with his disciples and fixed his quarter in the place where the Rishis were putting up. Valmiki called his dear pupils, Kusa, Lava, and told them to sing the whole of the Ramayana before kings, Rishis, and Brahmins in the place of sacrifice. Valmiki gave them some fruits and roots saying that they would never feel exhausted, nor their voice would at any time be hoarse if they would partake of them. Valmiki said, "If royal Rama be present amongst the Rishis, and if he summons you to him, then sing to him the whole of the Ramayana in the manner I have taught you to recite and to sing. Don't be too greedy about money. Of what use is money to

them who live in huts and feed upon fruits and roots? If Rama asks you whose sons you are, then tell him that you are my pupils. You see, the king, in a sense, is father to all; so do not slight his words, but sing it beginning from the Adi Kandam. Your lyres are in order, and sing the song tomorrow cheerfully in accompaniment of the Vina."

Valmiki then lapsed into silence, and Kusa and Lava bowed to his words.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE SONG

When the night was over, Kusa and Lava after taking their bath began to sing according to Valmiki's direction. Rama was greatly charmed by their songs. He grew highly curious about them and called the princes, the Rishis, the learned, the aged, the Brahmanas, the musicians, the painters, the grammarians, the dramatists, the logicians, the astrologers, the astronomers, and men versed in the Vedas and the Puranas to listen to that song. That song was wonderful and exceedingly sweet, and the delight of the audience grew more and more keen, as they listened more and more to the song. They did not feel in any way satiated and repeatedly stared at those two boys. It seemed as if they were drinking them with their eyes. They said that those two boys looked like Rama.

The boys sang twenty cantos from the beginning. Rama was highly pleased with their song and asked his brothers to pay eighteen thousand Nishkas to the boys. But Kusa and Lava refused to accept such a huge sum.

Rama was greatly surprised at that; they said that they were denizens of the forest, lived upon fruits and roots, and money was of little use to them.

Rama then enquired about the author of that wonderful song, and how long it was. The boys answered that worshipful Valmiki was the author of that poem. It consisted of twenty-four thousand slokas and one hundred legends. There were five hundred cantos and six Kandas from the beginning and the Uttara Kandam too had been added.[1] And it dealt with the events of Rama's life.

Rama heard the song for several days together, and in the course of it, came to know that Kusa and Lava were his sons born of Sita. Rama then sent envoys to Valmiki to tell him, that if Sita was chaste and pure she might come and absolve Rama from all shame. Thereupon, Valmiki agreed to Rama's proposal.

Then Rama told the princes and the Rishis to come on the following morning to witness the purification of Sita. All praised Rama for his decision.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE PURIFICATION

When the night was over, Rama appeared at the sacrificial ground. All waited in anxious breath to witness the purification of Janaki.

In the meantime, Valmiki entered the crowded place, Janaki following him with tearful eyes thinking

1 This conclusively proves that the Uttara Kanda is a later interpolation.

of Rama in her heart. Everyone was moved with sorrow by that sight. Then Valmiki addressing Rama said, "O king! here is your devoted wife, Sita, whom you banished in fear of public odium. Permit her to prove herself pure. These twin boys are your own sons born of Janaki. I have never told any lie. Believe me. If there be any stain of Janaki's character, let all my religious merits be destroyed for that. I tell you by my spiritual vision, that Janaki is pure, and you banished her from fear of a scandal."

Rama then said with joined palms, "O worshipful master! I take Janaki as chaste and pure on your words, but let her prove herself so. I know her to be pure, but have abandoned her from fear of slander. Save me from that. I know Kusa and Lava are my sons. My love for Janaki remains as before."

For Janaki's purification the gods, headed by Brahma, appeared on the scene. All on a sudden a sweet breeze began to blow.

In the meantime, Janaki clad in red, with downcast look, and with joined palms, said, "If I have never thought of any person but Rama, then let mother Earth be divided and let me enter into it. If I have adored Rama with my body and soul, let mother Earth be divided and let me enter into it. If this be true that I do not know anybody besides Rama, let mother Earth be divided and let me enter into it."

When Janaki was taking this solemn vow, a magnificient throne rose from the bowels of the earth. Goddess Earth took Sita in her embrace and disappeared

below.[1] Flowers were showered from above and the gods sang her praise.

When Janaki disappeared below the ground, Rama leaned against a wooden pole and began to weep with a downcast look.

After crying for a long time, Rama became inflamed with rage and sorrow. He then challenged goddess Earth to return his Sita to him, or he threatened to destroy it immediately. Then Brahma told Rama not to forget that he was Vishnu himself and that he would be united with Sita again in the heavenly region. Brahma then said that every incident of Rama's life had been recorded in the Ramayana.

Rama then dissolving the gathering entered the hut of Valmiki with Kusa and Lava and passed the night there in intense sorrow.

After Sita's disappearance, Rama grew very sad and dismissed the gathering of the princes and people. He always thought of Sita and did not take a second wife, but passed his days in thinking of her, and the golden statue of Sita supplied the place of his wife at the time of sacrifice.

1 Here Sita disappears like Proserpine, in Greek Legends the daughter of Ceres, an allegory representing the fertility of the soil and harvest in this way. Perhaps, on this analogy, Sita has been identified by many with ploughshare, as the name etymologically implies and the whole of Ramayana with the allegorical representation of the progress of Aryan cultivation into the Deccan.

CHAPTER XXX

THE AFTER-DEATH

Rama ruled for many thousand years. Worshipful Kausalya died first, then Sumitra and Kaikeyi were united with Dasaratha in heaven.

After some time, Yudhajit, king of Kekaya, came to see Rama, and urged Rama for the conquest of the Gandharva king, Sailusha, living on the north of the Indus. Rama then appointed Taksha and Pushkala, the two sons of Bharata, as rulers of the Gandharva region. Bharata followed his sons with a large army and established Taksha in Taxila and Pushkala in Pushkalavati as their respective rulers. Bharata then came back to Ayodhya after five years.

Rama then made Lakshmana's two sons, Angada and Chandraketu, the rulers of Karupatha. Rama brought Karupatha under subjection and founded the cities of Angadia for Angada and Chandrakanta for Chandraketu in Mallabhumi. Lakshmana went with Angada and Bharata with Chandraketu. Lakshmana and Bharata returned to Ayodhya after a year. Thus ten thousand years of their life were spent.

After some time, Death himself came in the guise of a hermit one evening, and told the sentry to inform Rama that he was an envoy of Maharshi Ativala and wanted to see Rama. Lakshmana informed Rama of that and Rama asked him to bring the envoy without delay. On Rama's enquiry about the cause of his arrival, the envoy said, that if Rama wished his own good then he must hear him in privacy, and whoever would see them together, or overhear them, would be

put to death by Rama. This was what the Muni desired, if Rama agreed to it, then he could tell Rama everything. Rama agreed to the envoy's words and asked Lakshmana to stand as a sentry at the door, so that none could enter there, or overhear their talks. Rama then asked the envoy to deliver his message.

The envoy then said that he had been sent by Brahma to remind Rama that the gods were waiting for him and it was time for Rama to return to heaven. Rama then expressed his willingness to act according to Brahma's wishes.

When Rama was thus engaged in conversation with Time—the Destroyer of all things—Maharshi Durvasa came to see Rama. Lakshmana asked him to wait as Rama was busy. Thereupon Durvasa burned with rage and threatened to curse Rama and his brother and all their people.

Lakshmana, in fear, preferred his own death to such a terrible curse. He then entered the room and informed Rama of Durvasa's arrival.

Rama then dismissed Time and came out to meet Durvasa. On seeing him, Rama asked what was his pleasure; thereupon Durvasa said that he had been fasting for one thousand years and he would break his fast that day, so Rama should feed him.

Rama entertained Durvasa with great care; then thinking of his promise before Time—the Destroyer—Rama became overwhelmed with grief. He understood that the time for his separation from his brothers had arrived.

Lakshmana finding Rama thus cast down with sorrow, said, "O worshipful lord! do not be sorry for me.

Such is the course of events. Now abandon me and fulfil your pledge." Then Rama stated everything to Vasishtha who advised Rama to give up Lakshmana, and Rama abandoned Lakshmana accordingly.

Lakshmana then did not go back to his place, but with tearful eyes went to the Sarayu. He then sat on its bank and suspended his animation. Indra then took away Lakshmana to heaven.

Rama was overwhelmed with sorrow by renouncing Lakshmana. He then thought of installing Bharata on the throne and of repairing to the forest. But Bharata refused it and asked Rama to establish Kusa on Kosala, and Lava in North Kosala. Envoys then went to Satrughna to inform of Rama's voluntary abdication to repair to the forest with Bharata. The envoys informed Satrughna about Rama's decision of going to heaven after establishing Kusa in Kusavati and Lava in Sravasti.

Satrughna called the people and told them that his end was also nigh. Then placing Suvahu in Mathura, Satrughna came to Ayodhya. Rama finding Satrughna quite resolved did not try to dissuade him any further.

At that time, the Vanaras, Bhallukas and the Rakshasas came to Ayodhya to see Rama about to renounce his life. Sugriva said that he had installed Angada on the throne and he too was determined to die. Rama then said to Vibhishana that he would live so long as mankind would live, and his kingdom would exist on earth as long as the legend of Rama would continue. Rama then told Hanuman to live so long as his life-story would continue on earth.

Rama then told Jamvuvan and Mainda to live till Kaliyuga, but Vibhishana would live till the final dissolution.

On the following morning, Rama issued from the palace to give up his life by yoga on the bank of the Sarayu. Beasts and birds followed him to witness that great sight. When Rama was to descend into the Sarayu, Brahma said, "O Vishnu! come to your heaven."

Rama then shuffled off his mortal coil; Bharata and Satrughna, too, by yoga follwed Rama to heaven. Sugriva, their faithful ally, followed suit; his effulgent spirit entered the sun.

This is Uttara Kanda composed by Valmiki and honoured by Brahma. He who reads only a stanza of it is absolved from all sins. Ayodhya was for a long time a deserted city. Then it again became populous on getting a king named Rishabha for its ruler.

The Ramayana with the Uttara Kanda has been composed by Pracheta's son, Valmiki: even Brahma has admitted it.

THE END